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British South Asian and bisexual
an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis of the male perspective

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British South Asian and Bisexual:

An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis of the Male Perspective

by

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Declaration

I hereby declare that the work submitted in this thesis is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated.

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Date: 27th September 2019

Abstract

This research study aimed to explore phenomenological elements in the experiences of British South Asian Males who are Bisexual (BSAMB).

Using an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) methodology and method, data was collected from six participants. Each participant identified being British South Asian (with an ethnic origin from the South Asian subcontinent; India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka); Second or Third generation (defined as born in the UK) and self-identified as Bisexual or Bi-curious.

Data analysis resulted in the generation of three superordinate themes; "Otherness and being Othered," (referring to thoughts, feelings and experiences of being from a racial and sexual minority background) "Development and growth in sexuality," (referring to exploration and growth around concepts of sexual identity, race, and the journey of self-discovery) and "The experience and difficulties in finding one's self," (exploring the experiences of what happens once participants become aware of who they are in the context of their backgrounds).

These participants indicated that difficulties arose in discussing issues around sex and sexuality when coming from a South Asian background, namely; (1) a lack of language and conceptualisation to discuss their sexuality (2) the challenge of engaging with disinterested communities and (3) finding themselves misunderstood. It is therefore suggested that therapeutic practice takes into consideration issues of male sexual and racial minorities and how to facilitate that discussion within harder to reach communities in the future.

Contents

Glossary

BAME	Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic
BME	Black and Minority Ethnic
BPS	British Psychological Society
BSAMB	British South Asian Males who are Bisexual (or Bi-curious)
DA	Discourse Analysis
DCoP	Division of Counselling Psychology (BPS)
GT	Grounded Theory
IPA	Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis
KSOG	Klein Sexual Orientation Grid
LGB	Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender
LGBT+	As above, but goes further to incorporate additional sexualities, (such as, but not limited to; Queer, Intersex and Asexual)
LGBTQ-POC	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender & Queer People of Colour
MSM	Men who have sex with Men
MSMW	Men who have sex with Men and Women
NICE	National Institute of Health and Clinical Excellence
NHS	National Health Service
ONS	Office of National Statistics

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Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 This study

This research project looks to explore the experiences of British South Asian Males who self-identify as Bisexual or Bi-curious (BSAMB) over the age of eighteen. The research will look to explore if and how being British South Asian, bisexual and male interact as concepts in the experience of a participant and what this could mean for them.

Previous research has focussed on Indian and Pakistani gay men (Jaspal 2012; 2014a; 2015b), but the experiences of BSAMB may be different to that of the aforementioned group, due to issues such as attitude towards bisexual men and women (Bronn, 2001; Eliason, 2001; Israel & Mohr, 2004; Spalding and Peplau, 1997) issues around invisibility (Steinman, 2000), and being from the South Asian diaspora (Kalra, 2009; Alexander 2000).

1.2 Reflections as a person

The research project will predominantly be discussed within third-person as is typically found within academic writing, however, the following subsections will be discussed within first person narrative as to provide an opportunity to speak to the reader in an appropriate manner as part of a qualitative research study (Berger, 2015).

When thinking about positioning myself within the context of the study, I have spent time deliberating on the topics presented within from the position of my own experience. Many of the themes of the study so far have been themes which I have encountered in my personal life, which I have previously found difficult to discuss.

Initially, I have looked into this research as I have identified issues such as representation and invisibility (Alaire and Gaudet, 2013; Barker, Bowes-Catton, Iantaffi, Cassidy and Brewer,

2008; Bradford, 2004; Steinman, 2001), minority stress (Meyer, 2003; Smith, Allen and Danley, 2007; Williams and Williams-Morris, 2000), sexual ambivalence (Ellwood, 2007; Fine, 1988; Goldenberg, Cox, Pyszczynski, Greenberg and Solomon, 2002; Gregersen, 1996; Zilbergeld, 1999), cultural and religious misunderstandings (Boyce, 2006), illicit substance misuse in the context of sexual encounters (Abdulrahim, Whiteley, Moncrieff and Bowden-Jones, 2016; Green and Feinstein, 2012) and fear of reproach from others (Laungani, 2004b; Lewis, 1971; Mollon, 2005; Moon in Halperin and Traub, 2009).

I am a cis-gendered male that has been in relationships with men and women (classically people identifying as male and female) in the past and have not self-identified as bisexual with much ease. I have varied experience of being visible in my relationships with people. My last sexual encounter with men was aged twenty-three, and I am thirty-four at the time of writing. I am married to a cisgender heterosexual female I met when I was twenty-six and we have a child together. She is aware of my being bisexual but was not made aware of my sexual orientation and identity until our relationship was well established for fear of reproach. She stated that she initially found this difficult to accept, however, after time spent reassuring her about our own relationship it has grown stronger as a result.

I am also a British born South Asian male from a Sikh background. I have expressed my sexuality to my parents in the past and have had mixed responses from them, including confusion and misunderstanding, however, it has not been a wholly negative or chiding experience. Part of my interest in conducting this research topic was initially to find elements of myself through the work I was conducting. Prior to embarking on this research, I had not thought about bisexuality as a praxis or through the lenses of differing epistemologies (Clausen, 1990; Garber, 1995; Pramaggiore, 1996; Herdt, 1984), living within my own

opaquely defined understanding of bisexuality (Barker, Richards and Bowes-Catton, 2012).

Interestingly, I did not disclose my sexuality to friends when I studied as an undergraduate, and subsequently my sexual relationships since studying at university have been heterosexual in nature, so I have not felt the need to disclose to them. This also changed when I went on to study the Counselling Psychology (Psych D) course at the University of Roehampton. In picking a topic area so close to my own experience, I have become aware that I will not remain invisible or that attempts to hide my ambivalence will be made available to others. In exploring the topic of my sexuality in my personal therapy, it has been interesting to think that I have not spent much time deliberating on the very essence of my ambivalence, this fear of reproach, and applying it to the wider possible experience of others who are bisexual or bi-curious.

I have also experienced a change in my own thinking during the course of the research which is the issue around my understanding of gender and gender conformity through the course of the research project (Barker, Richards and Bowes-Catton, 2012).

Initially when setting up the research project, I looked to defining inclusion criteria that were unintentionally trans-exclusionary, and subsequently, I have been approached by individuals expressing their concern about this from the Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender + (LGBT+) community. I had specified that I was looking for *male* participants, and this is to the detriment of men from the transgender community – however I had not been approached by anyone from South Asian communities who identified as a trans-man and was also bisexual. It did lead me on to some self-reflection about the circularity of not being approached by anyone who could have otherwise been included – but that may have also been partly due to my own sense of being closed off to those people initially. My initial

thinking around this was my own limited understanding of the *Hijra*[1] *(or Khusra*) community and their history (Gannon, 2009; Kalra, 2012) from my own experiences as a British South Asian. In learning about the richer history of these communities from the South Asian subcontinent I was alerted to the historical context of the Hijra community in South Asian consciousness and the paradox of reverence and hatred that these people live with in their day to day lives.

1.3 Reflections as a Counselling Psychologist in training

During my study at the University of Roehampton I have trained predominantly in three modalities of counselling including person-centred, psychodynamic and cognitive-behavioural therapies; which have afforded me opportunities to think about how I practice counselling from various perspectives, including the modalities which align more with my philosophy of working in a non-directive and intuitive manner (Scragg, Bor and Watts, 1999; Varlami and Bayne, 2007).

The course included lessons in critical thinking; attempting to contextualise various histories of psychology and psychotherapy, and the effects of the discourses that have garnered dominant narrative status such as those surrounding sexuality from evolutionary biology (Cope, 1887, Darwin, 1871; Kovalevsky, 1866) through to early psychiatry and psychoanalysis (Havelock-Ellis, 1905; Krafft-Ebing, 1886/1965; Freud, 1905/1962, 1925/1963). The results of early evolutionary biological and psychiatric pathologizing led to discriminatory practices when working with LGBT+ people (King, Semlyen, Killaspy, Nazareth and Osborn, 2007) which have been challenged increasingly in the last twenty to

[1] Hijra = Third gender peoples from the South Asian subcontinent.

thirty years (ibid).

Research has indicated that further training in counselling and psychotherapy courses towards understanding issues that LGBT+ people face benefit the counsellor's competency when working in therapeutic contexts (Bidell, 2013).

These same discourses could be viewed as analogues to the ones used when writing and thinking about Black, Asian and Minority Ethic (BAME) people in the context of discriminatory practices through counselling (Dalal, 1988a, 1988b; Hillman, 1986; Lago and Thompson, 1996; Morgan, 2002) and the histories of western imperialism being replicated in the therapeutic encounter with the client if they are not highlighted and understood by practitioners (Ahmed, 2006; Lago and Thompson, in Dryden, Edwards and Woolfe, 1989; Rogers, 1969).

I have also taken time to think about the issues around power and voice in the therapeutic relationship, insofar as attempting to understand the relative issues surrounding power dynamics from historical narratives surrounding sexuality and sexual practice, and how some forms of therapeutic interventions revolve around societal regulation in a Foucauldian manner (Hodges in Moon, 2014).

1.4 Reflections as a researcher

In attempting to research the experiences of BSAMB, I am looking to explore and gather data on how various elements of experience sit within an intersectional framework, in a possible way to explore how various elements of oppression work to diminish the experiences of BSAMB (Crenshaw, 1989; 1991; Collins and Bilge, 2016). I am not claiming that a

qualitative study can speak for all BSAMB but it could offer insight into issues that could affect others in the future and could build on pre-existing work that ties them together in a beneficial manner for the purpose of effective counselling outcomes in the future.

As time has progressed and I have read more around the subjects concerning bisexuality and race, not only from popular psychological/psychoanalytic literature, but from challenging, critical voices (Ahmed, 2006; Angelides, 2001; Crenshaw; 1989;1991, Dalal, 1988a, 1988b; Fine, 1988; Storr, 1999; Sedgwick, 1994) my attitude to the research work has evolved and I recognise that my personal subjectivity and my implicit and opaque understanding of what it means to be bisexual, British and South Asian has been challenged for the better.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 Overview

As part of the research process a literature review can be viewed as an "essential first step," (Baker, 2000, p.219) in the conduct of a research topic as it firstly seeks to uncover relevant information sources that can be used to highlight themes, procedures and concepts from the subject discipline (Brocke, Simons, Niehaves, Reimer, Plattfaut and Cleven, 2009) whilst also demonstrating that the research is building on previous studies (Harding, 2013; Brocke et al., 2009).

Hart (2001) indicates that there are two main types of literature, (1) methodological, pertaining to assumptions, arguments and debates and (2) topical literature, pertaining to definitions, questions and scope.

In understanding the purposes of the literature review and the questions being taken into consideration my presentation of the literature and subsequent literature review chapter will include the following subsections in which a funnel process was employed to move from general to specific areas (Forrester, in Sullivan, Gibson and Riley 2012). The following subsections of the literature review will look to explore various elements of the relevant literature including principal terminologies, definitions and practices.

The first subsection will look to explore theories and epistemologies of bisexuality, leading into what is known about bisexual males. The next subsection will look to explore research around British South Asians, leading into what is known about British South Asian males, and their sexual practices. The following subsection will then explore religious and cultural attitudes towards sexuality from a South Asian perspective leading into what is known about

present South Asian bisexuality. The next subsection will explore counselling perspectives for British South Asians, leading into what is known about counselling British South Asian males.

The research questions resulting from the literature review will be presented at the end of this section.

Literature was sourced from online databases such as *British Library EthOS catalogue*, *PsychInfo*, *EBSCO*, and *Web of Science*. In addition to this, certain academic journals were targeted for content which could have additional literature for consideration, such as the *Journal of Bisexuality*, *PEPweb* and the *Journal of Psychology and Sexuality*. The researcher conducted Boolean searches (Cooper, 2010; Atkinson, Koenka, Sanchez, Moshontz and Cooper, 2015) across databases in order to identify relevant literature and the terms included "Bisexual AND South Asian OR Indian OR British Asian" "Counselling OR Therapy AND South Asian OR Indian OR British Asian."

Relevant literature was also sourced from the University of Roehampton Library catalogue in form of physical format books or e-books.

2.2 Bisexuality

As an introduction to the literature review, the opening section provides a brief overview of the history, terms and practices relating to bisexuality and bisexuality research. The section looks to then explore research surrounding various experiences of bisexual peoples. Following on, there is a section that looks to highlight the change in media representations of bisexuality. The following section looks to explore the experiences of males who are bisexual

in the research literature.

2.2.1 Bisexual identities

Bisexuality, according to Storr (1999) can be viewed in two essentially diverging questions about the nature of what bisexuality *is*.

The first divergence being empirical in nature asks questions of biological essentialism such as male and female characteristics in the body (Darwin, 1871; Kovalevsky, 1866; Ellis and Symonds 1897), psychological male and femaleness as shared traits (Freud, 1905/1962; 1925/1963) or a shared space somewhere between homosexuality and heterosexuality (Kinsey, Pomeroy and Martin, 1948; Klein, 1993; Klein, Sepekoff and Wolf, 1985). Halperin (2009) indicates there are differences between looking at bisexuality as both a lived experience and as a set of sexual classifications, continuing on to suggest there are thirteen ways to define bisexuality as sexual classifications; enquiring into their conformities and divergences as categories, (see Halperin, 2009 for listing) although it can be observed that Halperin falls into binary male/female definitions, and bisexuality is contested as more than binary in various other definitions (Ochs, 1996).

The second divergence is concerned with bisexuality consisting of being a mixture of elements such as maleness/femaleness, masculinity/femininity and heterosexuality/homosexuality, or being a point between heterosexuality and homosexuality, either as a boundary between or as a uniting factor (Storr, 1999; Pramaggiore, 1996). *Bisexual* has emerged as a political, sociocultural and personal identity label since the nineteen-nineties (Hutchins and Kaahumanu, 1991; Eadie, 1993), however, development and meanings of bisexuality have received less scientific attention than homosexual identity in

sexuality research (Angelides, 2001; Dodge, Reece and Gebhard, 2008; Yoshino, 2000).

Concomitantly, research in sexuality continues to remain medicalised and essentialist (Anderson and McCormack, 2016; Dodge, Reece and Gebhard, 2008; Irvine, 2005), but there have been some attempts to understand the experiences of people who identify as bisexual through new discourses (Barker, 2007; Barker and Langdridge, 2008; Anderson and McCormack, 2016). Barker (2007) indicates that education of bisexuality has increased yet is still rarely mentioned, and when bisexuality is mentioned it often falls into a discourse of dichotomy as a position somewhere between hetero and homosexuality. Barker and Langdridge (2008) elucidate that there is a need to work dialectically in order to try and understand the tensions between historical sexual identities and more radical Queer identities.

2.2.2 Bisexuality categorisation

Historically, the attempts to both identify and classify bisexuality have evolved from scientific endeavors at sexual classification (Darwin, 1871; Ellis and Symonds, 1897; Krafft-Ebing, 1886/1965) which led to sexology discourses surrounding the differences between sex, gender role and sexual object choices (Angelides, 2001). Krafft-Ebing, upon publication of *Psychopathia Sexualis* (1886/1965), sought to distinguish acts of non-procreative sexual behavior such as homosexuality as an indicator of a psychopathology, therefore, to be considered as disease to be treated. Counter to that position, Hirschfeld (1940, 1948) offered an opposing view on homosexuality, as that of an innate and normative way of being. Resultant of this discursive development, heterosexuality and homosexuality were placed in dichotomous opposition in western thinking, with bisexuality later distinguished as a 'third,' position amongst this axis (Angelides, 2001; Drescher, 2015).

Following on from the evolutionary theory of bisexuality, Freud incorporated bisexuality as an element of '"failed Oedipal resolution," (Downing, 2017, in Giffney and Watson p.134) in understanding sexual practices stating "the most important of these perversions, homosexuality […] can be traced back to the constitutional bisexuality of all human beings." (Freud, 1925/1963, pp.71). Further understandings of the constitution of perversion is challenged by Freud's thinking around perversity in the *Three Essays on Sexuality* (Freud, 1905/1962) where "perversion has the characteristics of exclusiveness and fixation," (ibid, p161) indicating a contradiction in the logic of perverse sexual practice due to the fluidity of sexual object choice in bisexual people (Downing, 2017). During the second half of the nineteenth century various challenges towards Eurocentric patriarchal boundaries of gender, sexuality and race were being formed and subsequently were shaped as part of the hegemonic discourse of evolutionary theory (Angelides, 2006).

Post-Freudian psychoanalytic writing continued to indicate that treatment would be needed for non-normative sexualities (Bergler, 1944, 1958; Hartmann, 1964; Socarides, 1962, 1988) resulting in a cherishing of hetero-normativity in European psychoanalysis until the nineteen-nineties (Watson, in Giffney and Watson, 2017; Rapoport, 2009) with earliest challenges to this attitude arriving in the early nineteen-eighties (Chodorow, 2002).

Psychological research into bisexuality predominantly surfaced with the work of Kinsey, Pomeroy and Martin, (1948) when researching sexual practices in male participants. Without directly acknowledging bisexual males as a group of people within their own right, Kinsey et al., (1948) did reveal insights into both bisexual orientations and sexual practices.

Moving forward from the work of Kinsey et al., (1948) the development of the Klein Sexual Orientation Grid (KSOG) (Klein, 1993; Klein, Sepekoff and Wolf, 1985) looked towards multi-dimensional understanding of sexuality and sexual orientation which considered seven variables including attraction, behavior, fantasy, social and emotional preference, self-identification and lifestyle (Klein et al., 1985). Klein (1993) indicates that there are four kinds of bisexuality; transitional (pertaining to a period in which bisexuality is seen as a transition into a gay or lesbian identity or from where a gay or lesbian person moves into identifying as bisexual), historical (meaning a previous period of same-and-other gender attraction in the past) sequential (meaning people who have had relationships with men and women but in consecutive sequences) and concurrent (meaning people who are or have had relationships with men and women at the same time) (Fox, in d'Augelli and Patterson, 1995).

When studying self-reports of bisexual peoples using the KSOG (n=1753, female=786 male=967) Weinrich and Klein (2002) found that people who self-identified as bisexual clustered into three more distinctive sub-groups; Bi-Heterosexual, Bi-Bisexual and Bi-Homosexual. The study indicated that whilst there was a significant split between Bi-Heterosexual and Bi-Bisexual peoples, those that identified as Bi-Homosexual could be clustered closer to individuals that self-identified as Homosexual, and this result remained consistent between both male and female participants.

Halperin (2009) discusses thirteen differing ways in which bisexuality can be defined and explores the fissures and intricacies between varying definitions of bisexual and how one could go about categorising and attempting to understand what bisexuality is, however the central thesis and aim of highlighting so many differences between categories of bisexuality is to understand that categorization is not in the spirit of what Bisexuality is – as a sexuality

that transgresses boundaries or binary scales (for in depth discussion, see Halperin, 2009; see also Pramaggiore, 1996).

2.2.3 Bisexual phenomenology

Barker, Richards and Bowes-Catton (2012) discuss issues surrounding previous research in which they describe a polarity of bisexuality research either being celebratory (recognizing the challenge to gender and sexuality dichotomies) or critical (through reinforcement of gender dichotomy), and the pitfalls of bisexuality research such as the assumptions, beliefs or values that bisexual researchers make about the research that they are conducting (ibid).

When attempting to understand the significance of the shifting attitude towards bisexuality, previous research by Rosario, Scrimshaw, Hunter and Braun (2006) highlight that LGBT peoples as minorities are not necessarily raised in a community of others similar to themselves (unlike in ethnic and racial minorities) that they can learn about their identity and as such there is a sense of being "contextually unsupported and stigmatized" (Rosario et al., 2006, pp.46) which can lead on to incongruence between experience, orientation and identity (Eliason, 1996; Rosario, Hunter, Maguen, Gwadz and Smith, 2001). However, there is significant challenge to this due to the advent of social media and online communities and representation (see 2.2.4 for further discussion).

Research around bisexuality and experiences of life as a bisexual person have indicated multiple issues in bisexual peoples' experiences that include (1) bisexual minority stress (Brewster, Moradi DeBlaere and Velez, 2013; Meyer 2003) (2) biphobia and bi-negativity (Eliason, 1997, 2000) (3) bisexual privilege in men (Martos, Nezhad and Meyer, 2015; Weinberg, Williams and Pryor, 1994; Smiley, 1997) (4) health discourses and sexual health

discourses (Jaspal, 2018) (5) mental health discourses (Richards and Barker, 2013).

2.2.3.1 Bisexual minority stress

The conceptualization of sexual minority stress includes apparent experiences of prejudice, experience of stigmatization, and internalized prejudice (Brewster et al., 2013) which can lead on to general emotion dysregulation and social/interpersonal issues (Hatzenbuheler, 2009) but research into bisexual minority stress is sparse and the data is not easily generalizable (Balsam and Mohr, 2007; Brewster and Moradi, 2010). The unique manifestations that bisexual individuals face of prejudice include calls for immaturity, indecisiveness, calls for hyper-sexuality and instability in their sexual orientation (Brewster et al., 2013; Brewster and Moradi, 2010).

2.2.3.2 Biphobia and Bi negativity

Biphobia (Eliason, 1997, 2000; Ochs, 1996; Rust 1993a, 1993b, 1995) can briefly be explained as terminology surfacing in the 1990s as an adjunct to homophobia (Weinberg, 1972) and consists of negative attitudes towards people who are bisexual. As time has passed, the terminology of biphobia has been scrutinized and found lacking, as 'biphobia,' has been deemed indicative of irrational hatred of bisexuality rather than a true fear of people who are bisexual (Eliason, 2000; Haaga, 1991). Concomitantly, Bi-negativity (Eliason, 2000) as terminology surfaced in the 2000s as an adjunct to homo-negativity, which is replacing the aforementioned terminology in order to incorporate negative feelings of others towards bisexual peoples at an individualized and societal level (ibid). Consideration has been given to the aspects of coming out as a sexual minority, and as well as positive aspects of coming out, such as increased benefits in mental health (Henry, 2013; Savin-Williams, 1989), lower

anxiety (Monroe, 2001) and increased coping and resilience (Rhoads, 1995) these appear to be introspective positive changes. Further research indicates negative aspects and consequences from an interpersonal position due to rejection from family and friends (Frost, Lehavot and Meyer, 2013), peer victimisation (Guzzo , Pace, Cascio, Craparo and Schimmenti, 2014; Savin-Williams, 1994) discrimination and prejudice (d'Augelli, Pilkington and Hershberger 2002; Meyer, 2003).

2.2.3.3 Bisexual privilege in men

In contrast to the experience of Gay and Lesbian peoples, Bisexual peoples hold a relatively privileged position in their ability to be subsumed into heteronormative cultures. If they are dating opposite members of their sex, then they are often perceived to be in heteronormative relationships and as such do not face the same levels of prejudice that Lesbian and Gay people face when they choose to date or display public affection (Anderson and McCormick, 2012). Resultantly, bisexual men appear to come out later in life than gay men (Martos, Nezhad and Meyer, 2015; Weinberg et al., 1994) which research indicates leads to cyclical fear of coming out that results in further bisexual erasure.

When looking into the statistics, Pew analysis (Pew Research Centre, 2013) indicated that thirteen percent of bisexual males disclosed their bisexuality to friends, that sixty-seven percent of respondents had between 0-3 friends who are LGBT and that five percent would have close friends who are LGBT although the analysis does not indicate why this is the case.

2.2.4 Bisexual media representation

In the United Kingdom, the emergence of bisexual identities can be viewed by the way they have been portrayed in the mainstream media, literature and social media. Historically, there

has been little by way of overt media attention to bisexuality (Barker, Bowes-Catton, Iantaffi, Cassidy and Brewer, 2008) whereby often characters that explore sexuality are caught in the dichotomy of heterosexuality or homosexuality without an understanding of the nuances of sexual fluidity.

More recently, with the introduction of social media outlets such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram, there has been an active drive for 'Bisexuality campaigners' and LGBT+ organizations to promote bisexuality as a legitimate sexuality as much as possible.
In September 2017 for example, Twitter used the month of September to push bisexual narratives as Twitter Open (the Twitter LGBT+ platform) used the bisexual flag in their promotions leading up to 'Bisexual visibility day,' (September 23rd). Research by Nutter-Pridgen (2015) has indicated that bisexual activism is shaped by the requirement to be included in contemporary LGBT movements as bisexual peoples have historically reported feeling estranged from the mainstream Gay and Lesbian communities (Weiss, 2004; LeBeau and Jellison, 2009). This can afford LGBT individuals some ability to construct, manage and express identity online (Cooper and Dzara, 2010; Fox and Warber, 2014; Fox and Ralston, 2016) engage in activism (Cooper and Dzara, 2010), establish social capital and receive social support (Drushel, 2010; Baams, Jonas, Utz, Bos and Van Der Vuurst, 2011) and aide in identification of romantic and sexual partners (Miller, 2015).

2.2.5 Bisexual Males

In attempting to focus research review towards males who self-identify as bisexual, there is a series of conflations that appear to take place with males who identify as gay or males who are behaviourally bisexual (meaning will have sex with men or women without claiming bisexual identity) and this often occurs through the discourses of public health research.

Males become categorised as “Men who have sex with men,” (MSM) (Dodge, Schnarrs, Reece, Martinez, Goncalves, Melbranche, Van Der Pol, Nix and Fortenberry, 2013) or more recently “Men who have sex with men and women,” (MSMW) (Banik, Dodge, Schmidt-Sane, Sivasubramanian, Bowling, Rawat, Dange and Anand, 2018). In relation to public health discourses, these experiences are collated as part of wider research attempts understanding STI transmission and HIV status, or mental health concerns (McCormack, Anderson and Adams, 2014; Munoz-Laboy, Parker, Perry and Garcia, 2013), but less is understood about phenomenological aspects of life for this cohort of people (Banik et al., 2018).

2.3 British South Asians

The following section looks to explore the information that is available regarding British South Asians[2]. The section opens with a general overview of the terminology surrounding diaspora (Vertovec, 1997) and then looks to inform the reader about the context in which South Asians migrated to Britain. Following, the statistics regarding the population of South Asians in Britain will inform the reader of the make-up of the population (ONS, 2011). The literature highlights issues in British South Asian identity and processes affecting acculturation (Dhillon and Ubhi, 2003) and the outcomes. There appears to be a dearth of literature that looks to explore South Asian based sexuality from psychological literature. The following section looks to explore bisexuality in the context of South Asian religions.

[2] British South Asians = People born in the British Isles of South Asian heritage (from the South Asian Subcontinent; Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Maldives, Nepal, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka)

2.3.1 Diaspora

Diaspora is the descriptive terminology for any population which is considered trans-national, originating from a land other than that which it currently resides and who's economic, social and political networks cross over borders of nations (Vertovec, 1997) and that diaspora identity must be understood as dynamic and contrapuntal due to tensions across points of cultural difference (Durham, 2004; Gilroy, 1997). A semantic understanding recognizes various constituent components of what is meant by the distribution of people otherwise known as diaspora, either via (1) dispersion – a 'segment of people living outside their homeland,' (Conner, 1986, p.16) (2) homeland orientation – the orientation to a real or imagined home land as an authoritative source of value, identity and loyalty (Safran, 1991) or (3) boundary maintenance – the preservation of distinctive identity from the hosting societies (Brubaker, 2005) either via deliberate resistance to assimilation (Smith, 1986) or as unintentional consequence via social exclusion (Laitin, 1995).

Following the partition of India and Pakistan in 1947 and the subsequent independence of both states from the British Empire, there was a migration of approximately twelve million people across both sides of the border and this would often result in violent clashes at points where people met (Hasan, 2002). Due to the subsequent population growths in all South Asian states, there was a migration to access wealth from other resources, and following the post-war years of the Second World War, Britain allowed open access to South Asians via their status as Commonwealth citizens order to aide in the post-war reconstruction of the economy and the creation of social services (such as the NHS) until a shift in political opinion occurred in the 1960s (Brown, 2006; Hickman, 2007; Robinson, 2005; Parekh, 2000).

Presently, there are approximately 3.1 million people of South Asian origin living in Britain (4.9% of the population) (ONS, 2011) and the approximate numbers are given as 1.45m Indian, 1.17m Pakistani and 451,000 Bangladeshi people.

Looking further into demographics of religious breakdown there are 423,158 Sikh (87% South Asian), 2.7m Muslim (68% South Asian), 817,000 Hindus (96% South Asian), 248,000 Buddhists (60% South Asian) and 20,000 Jains (97% South Asian) (ONS, 2011).

2.3.2 British South Asians and acculturation

Previous studies have indicated that British South Asians are prone to tensions of being caught between eastern and western cultures, more commonly known as acculturation (Dhillon and Ubhi, 2003). This cultural conflict can be viewed as a factor in the cause of mental distress in ethnic minorities (Bryant-Waugh and Lask, 1991; Farver, Narang and Bhada, 2002; Singh and Clarke, 2006). Empirical studies have looked at identity formation and have found that individuals who did not engage in identity exploration were more likely to experience issues in psychological wellbeing (Adams, Munro, Doherty, Maryanne, Gordon, Peterson, Mette and Edwards, 2001; Meeus, Iedema and Maassen, 2002).

Previous literature has indicated that there is a difficulty that arises from differences in language, religion and cultural values (Dugsin, 2001) of the traditional cultural background and the individual in their new environment and culture (Rao, Channabassavanna and Parthasararathy, 1984). Further to this Hall (1996) notes that identity is conceptualized as the relationship between the subject and broader discursive practice; following that, media and popular culture offer discourses that play a key role in identity construction (Brown, Dykers, Steele and White, 1994; Currie, 1999; Durham, 1999).

Traditional familial values in South Asian context are placed on collective need, interdependency and conformity (Ponterotto, Casas, Suzuki and Alexander, 1995). Western values by contrast are based on the individual (Laungani, 2004b), individuation and separation (Erikson, 1968) occurring primarily during the process of puberty. Contextually, this was moderated by the historical moment in which South Asians came to settle in Britain and the subsequent attitude shift in the British - two examples being that British family sizes became smaller and British women were educated and had entered the workforce during the settlement of immigrant South Asians in the 1950s, which contrasted to the South Asian experience of bigger families and the patriarch as sole earner (Brown, 2006; Helwig, 1979).

Yamaguchi, Kuhlman and Sugimori (1995) established via their study, three culturally identified self-identities: (1) the collective self – motivated by the need to gain positive evaluation from the reference group in order to achieve group goals (2) the public self – motivated by the need to gain positive evaluation from important others who are not in the reference group (3) the private self – motivated by the need to gain positive evaluation according to internal standards.

The effects of acculturation and the struggle to negotiate between ego-identity and role confusion (Erikson, 1968) has indicated that there is a deficit in the ability to move on from the process of understanding the role of the private self in relation to cultural identity (Dhillon and Ubhi, 2003), which has been offered as a possible explanation for substance misuse in Sikh (heavy drinking) and Muslim (illicit substances) male populations (Cochrane, in Bhugra and Bahl, 1999; McKeigue and Karmi, 1993) and the identification that the risk of attempted suicide is three times higher in young South Asian women (Bhugra, Desai and Baldwin, 1999).

Moderating the effect of acculturation is the discriminatory product of prejudice, racism. Racism as experienced by South Asians in Britain has been identified as a contributing factor in acculturation difficulties (Dhillon and Ubhi, 2003). Fanon (1952) recognized that when racism is internalized, there is an inward projection of the negative attributes of the self, which gets acted out in behaviours and attitudes that reject internal concepts of self and create incongruence in the individual with regard to their own culture – leading on to anger, shame, confusion and loss (Dhillon and Ubhi, 2003).

2.3.3 Sexuality in British South Asian communities

In reviewing the literature, there appears to be dearth of knowledge about sexuality in British South Asian communities. Research is primarily focused on female attitudes to sex and sexuality (Brah, 1987) indicating that sexuality is subjected to external forces of race and racism.

One qualitative study found looked at the attitudes towards sexuality described by younger British South Asian girls indicated that clothing held a discourse around open sexuality, whereby 'English clothes,' for example held connotations of rebelliousness and active sexuality (Dwyer, 1999, 2000).

Another qualitative study by French, Joyce, Fenton, Kingori, Griffiths, Stone, Patel-Kanwal, Power and Stephenson (2005), interviewing seventy-five 13 to 21-year-old participants in London, Birmingham and Manchester indicated that insufficient emphasis was placed on sexual education. In the Bangladeshi cohort of participants, there was a generally negative attitude towards sexual expression pre-marriage or outside of marriage or casual sexual encounters as a reflection of religious and cultural upbringing (ibid).

The French et al., (2005) study also indicated that the Indian young people would not explore issues of sex or sexuality with their parents for fear of assumption in pregnancy. The male respondents had mixed thoughts around pre-marital sex and the emphasis was not about sex being wrong, but about personal choice in order have sex. The reasons given indicated that a closer relationship to religion decreased chances of pre-marital sex rather than any concerns about pregnancies or sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

Across both Bangladeshi and Indian communities there was a discussion around social stigma and the effects of negative views in the local community and the wider family unit (ibid).

2.3.4 Bisexuality in South Asian religions

Pattanaik (2017) outlines, via a queer reading that the makeup of all South Asian religions (Hinduism, Sikhism, Buddhism and Jainism) are based on similar tenets and are identified as the Karmic faiths, built on notions of dharma (moral law, religious practice, virtue and universal truth), rebirth, and that actions of the current life impact on future lives in the cycle of rebirth. Karmic faiths view the world as one without beginning (*anadi*) and end (*ananti*), with focus toward diversity, an understanding that society is transient, being accepting of social inequality and celebrating diversity.

Central to the notion of dharma, is the notion of outgrowing the animal desire borne of the instinct to survive. Karmic faiths acknowledge that all human beings seek power (*artha*) sensual pleasure (*kama*) liberation from burden (*moksha*) and the notion to pay back the debts owed to the world (*rinn*), and the only way to liberate one's self from this cycle is to follow the relative notions of dharma as outlined in the various religions.

Sexuality and sensuality (*kama*) are viewed as the animal desire that traps mankind in the endless cycle of rebirths and only the chaste person is considered pure and holy, but conversely one of the main ways in which to pay back rinn is to marry and produce children, thus opening a fissure between the acts of procreation and the acts of pleasure.

Between religions, there is also difference in relation to the notions of queer experience. Queer identities encompass all identities that are non-heterosexual in their nature, and whilst there is little emphasis on homosexual acts of the body acknowledged in the Karmic faiths, there is an acknowledgement and understanding of the fluidity of sexuality as outlined in the Hindu stories of Vishnu becoming Mohini (a female avatar) (Krishna, 2010), and of Lord Shiva becoming half male and female through the composite of Shiva and Parvati (also known as Ardhanarishvara) (Pattanaik, 2017; Monier Williams, 2008).

Buddhism states that queer *pandaka* (deficiency in male sexual reproductive capacity or reproductive desire) should not be ordained, and it is stated so in the *Vinaya Piṭaka*[3] (Numrich, 2009).

Pattanaik (2017) outlines that there are ways in which the Karmic faiths can affirm the notion of the queer person by understanding that (1) God/Nature is infinite and that there is no boundary (*rekha*) and no division (*khanda*), meaning that there must be an acceptance of that which makes no sense because the human mind is finite and limited (2) our body, personality and sexuality are outcomes of karmic burden and are therefore natural (3) understanding that queer people can be married as the marriage is signified by the joining of souls (*atma*) and that (4) everything in the eternal faiths have a way out (*upaay*) because nothing is fixed, and everything is fluid.

[3] *Vinaya Piṭaka*= a Buddhist scripture ("The basket of discipline,") that forms part of the *Tripiṭaka* (Vinaya Piṭaka, Sutta Piṭaka and Abhidhamma Piṭaka).

Of the religions that are prescient in South Asians and the diaspora, Islam is the faith that is primarily differing to that of the others insomuch as it is from an Abrahamic tradition (Islam, Judaism and Christianity) in comparison to the Karmic traditions.

Islam was introduced into the Indian subcontinent through the Mughal empire in 16th century via the rule of the subcontinent until the eighteenth century, and then continued as a religious practice under the Maratha Empire (19th century), overlapping British informal rule (1760s to 1858) before the partition of Bangladesh and Pakistan in 1947 (Rahman, 2014). During the time of the Mughal Empire, Islamic customs changed the approach of the subcontinent's attitude towards sex and sexuality (Chakraborty and Thakurata, 2013). However, this change in approach was not unidirectional, as some cultural practices were similar between both the prevailing Hindu population and the ruling Muslim population of the time (Gupta, 2007).

Islam, via Abrahamic roots contained an explicit condemnation of homosexuality and homosexual practices and engendered intolerance of such practices (Siraj, 2009; Yahya, 2000). The Qur'an indicates that males and females have been made distinct in nature and this is intrinsic to elements of Islamic doctrine (Nicolaisen, 1983), recognising that males and females are dependent on one another in a symbiosis (Dahl, 1997).

This is something that has migrated alongside South Asian Muslim populations migrating to Britain (Siraj, 2009). However, subsequent readings of the verses and hadiths that contain the information used to ratify these previous attitudes have challenged the dogmatic and literal understanding to begin a more interpretive understanding of what is being said (Kugle, 2003; Rouhani, 2007). Kugle (2003) discusses the notion that sexuality is divine creation (p.194) and race, gender and ethnicity, and as such should be something spiritually understood and

realized (Rouhani, 2007 p.192).

2.3.5 British South Asian Males and Mental Health

There is a dearth of literature surrounding the psychological needs of British South Asian Males. Research that has been published has generally indicated that Mental Health services in the United Kingdom were inadequate in addressing the religious and cultural needs of South Asian participants in general (Bowl, 2007; Netto, Gagg and Thanki, 2006).

In the research conducted by Bowl (2007) it was reported that South Asian communities are reluctant to use mental health services due to factors such as language barriers, cultural insensitivity resulting in feelings of exclusion and elements of institutional exclusion leading on to fears of safety and wellbeing within mental health services. This research data was corroborated by further investigation from Beck and Naz (2019) who researched the needs for mental health services in British South Asian communities in the UK and found that there were unmet levels of need in the community, referrers would find difficulty in identifying people needing referral and those who were referred would show high levels of non-engagement in services.

Netto et al., (2006) used a grounded theory methodology to explore the appropriateness of counselling services for South Asians in the United Kingdom. Although this was a study that focussed on an immigrant population (N= 38) rather than a second or third generation population, the indication from the study found that clients valued confidentiality, the ability to discuss issues with honesty and fresh perspectives on their issues.

Research that has focussed on differences between men and women from South Asian

backgrounds have indicated that men show lower rates of depression that women (Nazroo, 1997) but that they also fall under higher rates of alcohol consumption than South Asian women (Bhui and Bhugra, 2002). One previous study with South Asian men involved indicated that religion and spirituality were moderating factors in those who were referred to Alcoholics Anonymous, and that religious attunement became an important factor in recovery from alcohol misuse (Morjaria and Orford, 2002).

2.4 Intersectionality

Intersectional approaches to understanding the experiences that people have can offer a differing heuristic lens when reviewing the research that has been conducted. Within the last decade, there has been an increased interest in exploring the way differing intersections affect people of colour who are LGBT and the ways in which they are able to navigate multiple sites of oppression (Bowleg, 2008; Meyer 2010; Stirratt, Meyer, Ouellette and Gara, 2008). Bowleg (2008) indicates that epidemiological and biomedical research often exhibit the potential to answer key issues about structural inequality based on demographic data such as race, gender, sexuality and socioeconomic status, but are found to fall short due to a lack of development of meaningful constructs that measure these identities. Stirratt et al., (2008) have attempted to use the Hierarchical Classes Analysis (HICLAS) in a manner that assesses multiple identities and found that negative self-reports of sexual identity correlated with poorer mental health outcomes mediated through additional factors such as racial identity.

Ghabrial (2017) states that Lesbian, Gay Bisexual, Trans and Queer People of Colour (LGBTQ-POC) experience unique and contextual forms of prejudice and stigma that lead to increased chances and likelihood of mental and physical health issues.

Previous research by Akerlund and Cheung (2000) indicates that in addition to the racial prejudices that people of colour face, they continue to face the same issues within LGBT+ communities. Diaz, Ayala, Bein, Henne and Marin (2001) show that there are interactive and accumulative effects of various discriminations on health outcomes, including an increased risk of suicidality and depression in LGBT-POC when compared to their heterosexual counterparts (Cochran, Mays, Alegria, Ortega and Takeuchi, 2007). This increased risk also appeared when compared to white LGB people (Meyer, Dietrich and Schwartz, 2008).

Narvaez, Meyer, Kertzner, Ouellette and Gordon (2009) outline qualitative strategies designed to explore the intersections of ethno-racial, sexual and gender identities through assessing identity process, transactions between self and other and temporality through construction of a qualitative interview guide. The results of piloting their interview guide indicated that identities varied in prominence, predominantly with race being the most predominant identity in LGBTQ-POC. Narrative analysis within the same study allowed for the researchers to understand that these identities varied in valence due to context and intra-personal development.

2.5 Summary

Whilst there is increasing qualitative and quantitative research that explores facets of being bisexual across the world, much research is focussed primarily in the United States (US) and the United Kingdom (UK). Of the research that is conducted in the United Kingdom, there seems to be little by way of looking into the experiences that South Asian males have in being bisexual. Research appears to be developing to understand multiple intersections of sexuality research and has uncovered that LGBTQ-POC hold a set of experiences that may be

different to their White counterparts, and development of quantitative measures that look to explore these intersections is underway, however, the research is primarily based in the US. There appears to be a dearth of literature around the cultural and religious aspects of British-South Asians in the literature, and there also appears to be little by way of understanding these aspects in relation to geographical and temporal aspects of identity process when exploring previous literature on male identities and South Asian cultures.

This research project, using an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) methodology attempts to bridge some of these gaps by looking specifically at the phenomenological aspects of British South Asian Males who are Bisexual.

2.6 Aims and research questions

This research aims to provide contribution to the existing area of research around the topics of Male Bisexuality and South Asians. When regarding the IPA methodology, it is hoped that the researcher will provide supplementary understanding into the experiences and perspectives of British South Asian males who are bisexual through their own reflections and discussion about their experiences.

It is possible that the results and conclusions of this research project may have some impact for professionals looking to work with or understand some of the experiences that British South Asian bisexual males have, and it may also be possible that this research facilitates additional research in the future.

In effort to increase knowledge and understanding of the literature that is already available, the researcher will cautiously address the following research questions:

1. What is the experience of being Male, Bisexual and British South Asian?
2. How do these people make sense of their experience?

As IPA (Smith, 2011; Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009) is an exploratory study, there is no hypothesis determined as there is prominence on discovering if research questions can be answered through the research process.

Chapter Three: Method

3.1 Overview

This chapter details the approach chosen for the study; It includes a justification for the selected methodology and my own epistemological stance. This chapter also includes detail involving the data collection and analysis procedures as well as ethical considerations undertaken during data collection.

3.2 Introduction to qualitative research

Quantitative and qualitative paradigms to research were considered for the project, however, they are aligned to differing ontological and epistemological schools and as such convey the outcomes of research in differing manners (Ponterotto, 2010; Scotland, 2012).

Ontology is the study of being (Crotty, 1998) and concerns itself with *what is* when discussing issues of reality, and the constitution of reality as a perception of how things really are or how things really work (Scotland, 2012). Epistemology, concerned with the nature and forms of knowing (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2002; Scotland 2012) questions the nature of the relationship between what can be known and the "would be knower," (Guba and Lincoln, 1994 p.108). When discussing the differences between paradigms, it is of note to understand that the fundamental principles of undertaken studies are not shared between qualitative and quantitative investigations (Madill, Jordan and Shirley, 2000). Partially, this is borne from the notion that qualitative studies aim for some level of homogeneity in order to explore the data whereas quantitative studies look towards heterogeneity in order to corroborate or disprove hypothesis for broader implication (ibid).

Quantitative methodology has generally been the preference of mainstream psychological

research due to its nature of hypothesis construction, testing and subsequent understanding of outcome via experimentation (Pietkiewicz and Smith, 2014) however there is an growing trend of literature that looks to explore the sense making, experience of events and attributional context of experienced phenomena coming from qualitative research (Willig, 2013).

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) as one such qualitative approach provides a means of exploring the subjective experiences of a homogenous group of participants in order to ascertain a clear sense of their lived experiences (Mercer, 2012).

The approach of the researcher was to understand the subjective experiences of the individual and to explore the meanings these individuals attached to their experiences and the events recalled in their life. Willig (2013) indicates that qualitative research is well suited to an in-depth exploration, interpretation and description of a defined, heterogenous group of individuals. To capture the complexities and richness of these subjectivities, IPA was deemed the best fit for researching the experiences of British South Asian males who self-identified as Bisexual.

3.2.1 Rationale

In conceptualizing the paradigm best suited to the research topic's aims, which were to understand the relationship between males who identify as bisexual, their religious and cultural background and the effect it has on their lived experiences, it was deemed that working from a positivist framework was not suitable enough to capture the complexity of the data and the analysis would fail to incorporate an understanding of phenomenological, historical and cultural perspectives (Langdridge, 2007; Willig, in Smith, 2003; Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). Previous researchers of bisexuality have discussed the way

bisexuality research has formerly conflated research findings, leading on to assumptions about the experiences of people who are bisexual (Barker et al., 2012). In understanding the previous literature and research findings regarding people who identify as bisexual from minority ethnic backgrounds, there is a recognition these experiences are significantly different from mainstream experiences due to racial background and religious upbringing (Collins, 2008; Das Nair and Butler, 2012; Dworkin, 2002; Moradi, DeBlare and Huang, 2010).

As the topic of the study and my interest as a researcher was aligned towards understanding the subjective experiences of the individual, IPA was deemed a better fit in terms of the aims of the research. The interest lay in understanding and interpreting the feelings, thoughts and perceptions of the individual experiences of people, described as self-interpreted beings (Taylor, 1985) rather than looking to discover what is real, or what these feelings could be caused by. In regarding this, there is not a search for a truth per se but a willingness to be open to the possibility of multiple truths (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009; Willig, 2003) in events. In understanding that there are British South Asian males who are bisexual, there is no absolute concordant experience translated to all British South Asian males who are bisexual.

Concomitantly, the reflexive component of IPA should not be overlooked as this offers an enhancement to the research (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). As a doctoral candidate in the degree of Counselling Psychology I have been encouraged to think about the theoretical underpinnings of working in a relational context to practice as a mental health practitioner. I have also needed to acknowledge my own preconceptions and beliefs about researching the experience of British South Asian males who identify as Bisexual as this could be detrimental

and hindering in the process of this research.

3.2.2 Ontological and Epistemological considerations

Epistemology is concerned with the concept of *how* we can know about something (Willig, 2013). This study takes in to account epistemic qualities of research and research claims.

Madill, Jordan and Shirley (2000) state that traditional quantitative psychological study is informed from a positivist position, and logical observations can be inferred from strict correspondence with the material to produce replicable and reliable results (Brink, 1991). Secondary to understanding data from a positivist position is the notion of empiricism, which looks to recognise and incorporate facts of experience via experimentation and recording of results, which can then be incorporated into general theories (Denzin, 2008; Willig, 2013). Underlying both principles is an understanding that the researcher is an observer, removed from the data in an omnipresent context (Madill, Jordan and Shirley, 2000; Willig, 2003)

However, there are questions about the production of knowledges (Danziger, 1994; Harre and Secord, 1972; Sherrard, 1998) which occur from a positivist and empirical stance. Burr (in Wright, 2015) indicates that human experience is mediated by various external factors including culture, linguistics and history that change interpretations of how others construct their world, and this is something that is not considered via empirical research (Gunzenhauser, 2006; Willig, 2013; Yilmaz, 2013).

Social constructionist epistemologies conversely can be viewed as broad and multifaceted perspectives on research that are rooted in phenomenology (Alvesson, 2012) and aim to study how realities are socially constructed (Greene, 2007; Hacking, in Galison and Stump, 1996;

Hacking and Hacking, 1999). Berger and Luckman (1967) question how "subjective meanings become objective facilities," (1967 p.30) and looked to explore the relationship between objective macro relationships and subjective micro relationships (Alvesson, 2012). Berger and Luckmann (1966) posit that the experience of 'self,' is developed in meaningful interaction with others and as such social order is developed through these interactions because human beings are social beings confined to forms of stability - mediated by observations of others and their actions (Alvesson, 2012; Berger and Luckmann, 1967; Thomas and Thomas, 1928). The social world is not to be viewed as pre-existent (Durkheim, 1964), is contingent on upon time and setting (Garfinkel, 1967), reality is subjective and differs from person to person (Guba and Lincoln, 1994) and our own views on the world shape our responses to it (Thomas and Thomas, 1928).

A critique of social constructionist perspectives indicates a growing concern that the gains in subjective experience of social phenomena have "eroded a psychological appreciation of the effects of embodied experience and materiality," (Houston, 2001 p.847) as there is an objection to the essentialism – meaning that various phenomena have some form of immutable core properties – of other epistemological perspectives (Alvesson, 2012). Further to this critique Searle (1999) has shown that there can be "an objective reality that is what it is only because we think it is what it is," (Searle, 1998 p.113) visible through collective intentions to assign physical entities symbolic functions.

Critical Realism being the approach adopted in this research study proposes a third perspective indicating that there are stable realities including experiences and events that exist independently of subjective conceptualisation and beyond the social constructions of them (Bhaskar, 1975) whilst also holding the tension that these experiences can only be

partially accessed (Beck, 1992; Hammersley, 1992, 2012; Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009; Willig, 2013). The objective of critical realism is to identify the deeper lying mechanisms which are taken to generate empirical phenomena and therefore move the focus of study from the event to the mechanism underlying it (Alvesson, 2002; Bhaskar, 1998).

Critical realism indicates that different people experience different aspects of the same reality but that these differences are interpreted and assigned meanings via subjective perspectives (Fade, 2004). Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2009, p.27) explain "what counts as worthwhile knowledge is determined by the social and positional power of the advocates of that knowledge," indicating that knowledge is both socially constructed and is also influenced by the power relations within society (Scotland, 2012). Bhaskar (1975) states that this is due to a reality that is independent of subjective thought, differentiated in three levels; the empirical (experienced) event, the actual of all events (experienced or not), and the causal (accepting mechanisms of event generation) (Bhaskar, 1998; Houston, 2001).

Further to this is a consideration that there is an inherent subjectivity in knowledge generation, and for the researcher there is a recognition that knowledge-generation is context-specific and is in turn influenced by the viewpoint of the researcher (Lyons and Cole, 2007). Regarding this research topic, the theoretical position of critical realism acknowledges the view that there are British South Asian males who are bisexual, and the study looks to understand what the experience of being bisexual is like for them.

Due to the position of a critical realist perspective the researcher believes that it is not possible to directly access the world of the individual and that the findings may reflect on his own perspective. IPA recognises this in its own framework due to the study of Hermeneutics

which acknowledges access to reality is partial (Heidegger, 1927/1962; Smith and Osborne, 2004).

3.3 Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)

3.3.1 IPA in counselling psychology

Within the Division of Counselling Psychology (DCoP) practice guidelines from the British Psychological Society (BPS) (BPS, 2016) suggestions are made regarding the "congruence between the model of research chosen and the values expressed in counselling psychology," (ibid, p.6) and indicates that practitioners will be "reflective about their practice," (ibid, p.7) and contextually, IPA can be seen as fitting the ethos of counselling psychology.

IPA employs an inductive approach to understanding the subjective experiences of the participant through collection and analysis of the data (Pietkiewicz and Smith, 2012) and this is also indicative of the counselling psychology training undertaken by the researcher, as outlined in the DCoP practice guidelines (BPS, 2016) which state to "engage with subjectivity and intersubjectivity, values and beliefs" (ibid, p.1) and "to elucidate, interpret and negotiate between perceptions and world views but not to assume the automatic superiority of any one way of experiencing, feeling, valuing and knowing" (ibid, 2016 p.1-2).

In considering the DCoP guidelines (above) IPA looks to develop an understanding of the lived experience of research participants through a procedure of "interpretative engagement with the text and transcript," (Smith, 1998, p.189) based primarily on three philosophical theories; phenomenology, hermeneutics and idiography (Eatough and Smith in Willig and Stainton-Rogers, 2008; Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009).

Phenomenology, is "tasked with the use of thick description and close analysis of lived

experience to understand how meaning is created through embodied perception," (Starks and Brown Trinidad, 2007 p.1373). Rooted in nineteenth and twentieth century philosophy, transcendental phenomenology was developed initially by Husserl (1931/2012) as a method of studying phenomena through consciousness (Finlay, 1999). Subsequently, Heidegger (1927), Merleau-Ponty (1962) and Shutz (1976) looked to develop phenomenology through the lenses of hermeneutics, existential phenomenology and social phenomenology respectively (Finlay, 1999; Smith Flowers and Larkin, 2009). Through development within phenomenological philosophies and research there are differing emphases on description, interpretation, scientific rigour and poetic licence (Finlay, 2012). Husserl's approach has a primary focus on describing the phenomena as experienced, whereas Heidegger's approach to phenomenology favours a more interpretative approach (ibid). As the focus of IPA is to understand the experience of other people's relationship to the world (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009) there is an inherent requirement to embrace the interpretative aspects of their experiences as they look to create meaning from said experiences (ibid). Where IPA situates itself is closer to the interpretative exploration found in Heidegger's understanding rather than the descriptive and objective explanations sought in Husserl's (Carman, 2002; Smith and Osborn, 1998).

Concomitantly, Hermeneutics as the theory of interpretation is tied to the philosophy of phenomenology as envisaged by Heidegger (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). Whilst phenomenological study is focused on the descriptive elements of the phenomenon under investigation, hermeneutics is concerned with the interpretative qualities. Smith (2007) discusses the differences between Gadamer's (1990) position on hermeneutics and Schleiermacher's (1998). Gadamer (1990) takes the position that hermeneutics should concern itself with the meaning of the content in the material being studied rather than to

consider the intention of the author (or participant). Schleiermacher (1998) in comparison looks to understand the writer in the context of the writing as well as the text that is being studied for interpretation. Smith argues that Schleiermacher is "attempting a holistic analysis of the interpretative processes. The text is determined both by the linguistic community the writer is socialised into but also by the individual work the individual does with the language," (Smith, 2007 p.5) As IPA generates contemporary data from research participants, there is an opportunity for the researcher to learn "both about the person providing the account and the subject matter of that account," (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009, p.37).

Hermeneutics also concerns itself with the notions of both the hermeneutic circle and the hermeneutic turn (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009; Smith, 2007). The hermeneutic circle is a non-linear concept of looking between the part and the whole (such as understanding the words and the sentence) to gain a deeper understanding of them both in the context of interdependency (Schmidt, 2016; Willig, 2013). The hermeneutic turn (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009; Smith, 2007) looks to acknowledge the changing dynamics in the research process for the researcher to learn and understand the changes that are occurring within themselves through each interaction with a participant in the process.

The researcher of the current study is looking at exploring experiences of being bisexual, British South Asian and Male not only from the role as a Counselling Psychologist, but also as a British South Asian Male who is bisexual. As the researcher can identify with the participants there needs to be additional awareness and account taken of the preconceptions and assumptions of what the researcher brings to this research project in a reflexive manner as outlined in the DCoP guidelines (BPS, 2016).

As a third component in IPA, Idiography, concerns itself with commitment to in-depth analysis of the lived experience of a particular participant in a particular context (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). The aim of concentrated focus on the individual is to understand the participant, their views and to accentuate their voice in the transcript (Larkin, Watts and Clifton, 2006) to develop the meaning of what is being conveyed rather than to focus on the individual themselves. It is through this change in perspective that the developed meanings can be parsed alongside the meanings found through the accounts of other participants (Harré, 1979) so as not to lose the voice of the individual within the analysis of the broader experiences.

3.3.2 Considerations of other methodologies

Regarding the methodologies that were available as a qualitative researcher, consideration was given to Grounded Theory (GT) and Discourse Analysis (DA) in looking to conduct research regarding British-South Asian males who are bisexual.

GT initially developed by Glazer and Strauss (1967) and modified by Charmaz (2006; in Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2008) in a more constructivist lens adopts a position of a more explanatory model for research and is concerned with the formulation of a theory or model from the data interpretation (Payne, 2016) and how something is achieved in social interaction (Dey, 1999). Noted is the discussion from which GT developed, as qualitative research was previously viewed as "impressionistic, anecdotal, unsystematic and biased," (Charmaz, 2006 p. 5). As such, GT was developed to provide practical guidelines that would enable the construction of theories relating to social processes through data (Dunne, 2012). Corbin and Strauss (2015) indicate that GT requires between eight and twelve participants

generate data to reach a saturation level and this is viewed as a large sample.

DA concerning itself with discovering how knowledge and identity is negotiated through language use (Pyett, 2003) via exploration of the action of talk, how the world is constructed through talk and the ideological meaning in those construction (Reicher, 2000; Willig 2013).

DA and Grounded theory are not concerned with the experiential aspects of the participant in the same manner as IPA (Smith, 2011; Willig, 2013) in so much as IPA researchers typically talk to participants about their lived experiences and how they make sense of such experiences (Smith, 2011).

In consideration of these differing approaches, it was understood that because the research concerned itself with the experience of being; Bisexual, British-South Asian and Male, methodologies that were concerned with constructing theories such as GT and methodologies such concerned with understanding the discourse such as DA were less appropriate than IPA.

3.4 Procedures

In the following sections I look to address the ethical considerations, the recruitment and data collection methods and the quality of the sample recruited for the research project.

3.4.1 Ethical considerations

Due to the nature of the research topic and the experience of stigma towards people who identify as LGBT (and to this study those that identify as bisexual,) considerations given regarding the ethics of the study. Qualitative research "poses ethical challenges in terms of informed consent, recruiting participants and gaining access to diverse communities,

confidentiality, researcher dual roles and multiple relationships, interpretation and ownership of knowledge generated," (Ponterotto, 2010 p.587)

Participants were offered informed consent prior to participation in the study and were offered introductory literature regarding the nature of the research topic and the aims of the study (see Appendix K) Prior to any interview, participants were requested to sign a consent form (see Appendix L). Participants were informed that they would be offered pseudonyms if needed and any identifiable information would be redacted from the transcript when written up. Due to the nature of the topic, transcripts were not offered to outside services and were transcribed by the researcher. Participants were informed that they could leave the interview at any point. They were informed that they could withdraw their participation from the study at any point until the analysis of the data was compiled when looking for superordinate themes in the data.

Participants were offered the opportunity to review the transcripts and were encouraged to add additional comments and notes in the transcribed data to further understanding of their experience as a means for respondent validation (Silverman, 2015).
The study was approved under the ethics committee at the University of Roehampton (Ref: PSYC 17/258). Supporting documentation can be found in Appendix W. The ethical approval gained from the University of Roehampton stood in accordance with the BPS Code of Human Research Ethics (2018) and Code of Ethics and Conduct (2014).

3.4.2 Sampling

Participants were recruited using an opportunity sample. The nature of the research topic was to explore the phenomenological aspects of life as a British South Asian Male who identified

as Bisexual. As such, the inclusion criteria were defined to create as homogenous a sample as possible in line with the structure of an IPA.

3.4.3 Inclusion and exclusion criteria

To be British-born and from a South Asian heritage background; "South Asian heritage background" is used to describe people of varying religious and ethnic backgrounds that can trace their heritage to the subcontinent of India, Bangladesh and Pakistan (Assanand, Dias, Richardson and Waxler-Morrison, 1990; Ibrahim, Ohnishi and Sandhu, 1997). In the United Kingdom, British South Asians are a culturally diverse and heterogenous group of approximately 3.07 million people (4.9% of UK) (ONS, 2011). Further breakdown indicates that 1.45 million (2.3%) people are from Indian heritage background, 1.17 million (1.9%) from Pakistan and 452,000 (0.7%) from Bangladesh. Approximately 50% identify as Muslim, 23% Hindu, 13% Sikh, 4% Christian and 10% other (including Jain and Buddhist) (ibid).

To be male; This inclusion criteria was acknowledged as part of the initial participant identification. Rather than inclusionary criterion, it appeared to have exclusionary properties when questions arose around the inclusion of males instead of men (which would be inclusive of trans-men). However, this was deemed appropriate as transgender men are often in various places regarding transitioning between bodies, and this includes issues such as endocrine manipulation (Butler, in Richards, Bouman and Barker, 2017), chest surgeries (Yelland, in Richards, Bouman & Barker, 2017), metoidioplasty or scrotoplasty (Ralph, Christopher and Garaffa, in Richards, Bouman and Barker, 2017), and psychological/psychotherapeutic input (Richards, in Richards, Bouman and Barker, 2017). Whilst the study could have been inclusionary of trans-men, there was a sense that being within varying stages of transition would have affected the need for homogeneity, and as such, the notion of male experience

was prioritized, so those born as biologically male were requested for this project.

To be second or third generation; Various sociological studies find immigrant and first-generation peoples as differing entities (Algan, Dustmann, Glitz and Manning, 2010; Zimmerman, Zimmerman and Constant, 2007) however, there are also definitions indicating immigrant and first-generation peoples are the same entities (Merriam-Webster, 2019). In the instance of this study, the purpose was to focus on diasporic males of South Asian heritage that had been born in the United Kingdom, and as such "second generation," was defined as a person who was born in the United Kingdom of parents who were immigrant generation. Subsequently, "third generation," was defined as diasporic males who were born in the United Kingdom from parents who were also from the United Kingdom.

To be over the age of eighteen; People who are considered adults by the National Institute of Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE, 2004, 2011)

To self-identify as bisexual or bi-curious; Definitions of bisexuality differ from romantic and sexual attraction and sexual behaviour to both male and females to romantic and sexual attraction and sexual behaviour to people of any sex or gender identity (Firestein, 2007; Soble, 2006). In line with research that indicated people can self-define (Klein et al., 1985; Weinrich and Klein, 2002; Halperin, 2009) participants who self-identified were sought.

3.4.4 Recruitment

Initially, contact was made with various third sector services, LGBT affiliated establishments and LGBT university societies. Regarding university societies, initial contact was made with various student unions to seek prior permission to approach their LGBT societies.

Once these various services came back into contact with the researcher, recruitment materials were offered to them electronically to distribute to member networks and possible participants were identified and encouraged to be in contact.

Secondly, I created an online presence via a website with a dedicated contact page, and a dedicated research proposal page. These pages were then advertised and posted via various social media platforms (Twitter, Instagram & Facebook) via targeted advertising strategies (which included targeting keywords such as; Bengali, Bisexual, British Asian, British South Asian, Buddhism, Buddhist, Hindu, Hinduism, India, Indian, Islam, Jain, Jainism, LGB, LGBT, Muslim, Pakistan, Pakistani, Punjabi, Sikh, Sikhism).
Influential social media accounts also picked up these posts and amplified the adverts to their associated followers.

With regards to paid advertising using these targeted methods, the advertising reached 13,451 people on Facebook, with 465 click-throughs (3.45%) and 28 shares. Similarly, using Twitter advertising 23,553 people were reached using their advertising with 694 click-throughs (2.95%).

Various message boards were also identified as places that the researcher could advertise and websites such as Craigslist, Gumtree and several British South Asian community-based websites were places where the research website and advertising materials were posted. It was advised that no one interested in participation were to post directly in response as this could breach anonymity for the possible participant. Instead they were requested to get in touch via the contact form on the research website or via email as provided.

No participants came forward from the University LGBT groups that were contacted.
No participants came forward from LGBT services.

Once interviews had been conducted, participants were requested to contact any other possible participants they knew would be eligible and interested (if any) to recruit via snowball sampling methods. To date, no participant has been in contact with any other potential or eligible participants that would be willing to be interviewed.

Of the participants that engaged with the project, three engaged via Facebook advertising, one via Twitter advertising, one via a British South Asian website and one engaged via an email being circulated through their network at work.

3.4.5 Participants

As a result of these recruitment methods, six participants were recruited between the ages of twenty-six and forty-five years old. The sample was varied according to religious background, but all participants had met the inclusion criteria. Each participant self-identified as bisexual or bi-curious. Their demographics can be viewed in the table (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1 - Summary of participants' demographics.

Pseudonym	Age	Self-identified sexual orientation	Status	Religious background	Generation
Taranjit	45	Bisexual/Gay	Separated, in a new relationship	Sikh	Second
Pardeep	38	Bisexual	Divorced, in new long-term relationship	Sikh	Second
Varin	33	Bisexual	Single	Hindu/ Spiritual	Second
Mithun	31	Bi-curious/Queer	Single	Muslim	Second
Nirupam	26	Bisexual	Single	Jain	Second
Sukhjeev	36	Bisexual	Married	Sikh	Second

3.5 Data collection

3.5.1. Procedure

Once the participants requested participation in the research study, and email was sent to them with an acknowledgment of their registered interest in participation. Attached to the email was a participant information booklet with an information sheet (see Appendix K), consent form (see Appendix L), demographic form (see Appendix M) and an interview schedule (see Appendix P). Potential participants were requested to come forward with any additional questions and if they were consenting to continue, an interview was scheduled.

As part of the recruitment process, initially a place identified to interview participants was Whitelands College, University of Roehampton. This was offered as a place of anonymity that participants could come to contribute in the interview process. Secondary to this, when participants contacted and discussed their issues with arriving on site at Whitelands College – primarily due to travel constraints – a new place was identified to conduct the studies in private. In all instances, the researcher contacted libraries local to the participant, and could arrange for use of rooms or pod services, which provided privacy to record interviews.
In instances where the participant was met at a library facility, the researcher would arrive at the library prior to interview time to set up the recording equipment and to check the room for suitability.

3.5.2 Semi-structured interview

The interviews were semi-structured and followed an interview schedule that was designed to look at aspects of the experience that individual participants had with regards to religion/culture, sexuality and management of interpersonal relationships (see Appendix P). Although four general areas were identified for exploration, semi-structured interviews allow

for flexibility within the confines of the engagement in order to facilitate the participant leading the conversation (Smith and Osborn, 2008) and for the interviewer to react in a flexible manner for any lines of inquiry that opened up during the process (Smith Flowers and Larkin, 2009; Smith and Osborn, 2015) through the use of non-directive, open ended questions (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009; Pietkiewicz and Smith, 2014). Not all questions were asked during the interviews, but notes were taken when the answers were given that elucidated the questions in the schedule (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). It was expected that participants could venture away from the topics of study but use of counselling skills, such as active listening (Culley and Bond, 2011; Sutton and Stewart, 2008) whilst being mindful of role confusion (Dickson-Swift, James, Kippen and Liamputtong, 2006) and understanding the role as researcher (Weiss, 1995) in the "joint construction of meaning" (Gubrium and Holstein, 2002, p.16).

Interviews aimed to be between sixty and ninety minutes long. The shortest interview was fifty-four minutes and the longest interview was eighty-four minutes. The researcher recorded interviews on two differing digital devices with one being used as a back-up in case of failure of the other.

Once the interviews were completed, the participants were offered an initial debrief and time was spent discussing any concerns or issues that the participant felt were raised when contributing in the interview process.

Participants were encouraged to keep note of any thoughts or feelings that they held in the following days and if there were any issue regarding the interview, they would be able to contact the researcher.

3.5.3 Transcription

The interviews were transcribed verbatim, with line numbers as recommended in Smith, Flowers and Larkin, (2009, p.73). The transcripts included filler words, pauses, utterances and stuttering in order to remain as close to the participants' world during analysis (Rodham, Fox and Doran, 2015). Whilst a modified form of conversation transcription conventions were used (see Appendix Q) (Jefferson, 1985; Hutchby and Wooffitt, 2008) in order to assist in transcription (Molder and Potter, 2005) it is of note that because "IPA aims primarily to interpret the meaning of the content of the participants' account it does not require a particularly detailed transcription of the prosodic aspects of the recording," (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009, p.74).

After transcripts were typed, they were checked for accuracy and then treated for anonymity procedures as outlined in the ethical considerations. All names, dates and places that could have identifiable consequences were redacted from transcripts. As outlined in the "Data Protection Act" (DPA) (1998), the University of Roehampton guidelines on data (See Appendix O), the BPS code of Human Research Ethics (2018) and the BPS code of Ethics and Conduct (2014) on data, interview transcripts, participant consent forms and identifying information were all kept separate.

Once the interviews had been transcribed, the participants were emailed copies of their interviews, which had been password protected in accordance with the DPA and GDPR policy. Once they had been in contact to state they had received the email containing the document, they were then sent the password to open and review the document.

3.5.4 Data Analysis

3.5.4.1 Reading the transcripts

Following the completion of transcription, the data was printed out and read numerous times. As recommended in the analysis literature, the data was also listened to in conjunction with the audio recordings and any questions of note were kept in a journal away from the transcript (Smith, 2011).

3.5.4.2 Exploratory comments and interpretative coding

Following the preliminary step of reading and re-reading the text, initial exploratory comments were noted on the printed transcript with a colour pen. These notes included associations and preliminary interpretations to the data being presented (Smith, 2011). Time was spent thinking about; (1) what it could mean to be the participant through the data that is being revealed (2) what the experiences they were describing could mean for them (3) what they were exploring in terms of the meaning of their relationships (4) what their opinions are relating to their experiences (Smith, 2015; Rizq and Target, 2008).

After this initial stage was completed, a further analysis was conducted in order to provide further interpretative coding, drawing on psychological concepts (Willig, 2013). This process was then completed for each participant. This level of coding was conducted in a different colour pen to the first stage of coding. This level of reading and notation was conducted to step away from the exploratory aspects of the analysis and included psychological terminology to express a participant experience succinctly.

Through the process of reading and returning to the transcripts, words in the transcript were highlighted if retaining a sense of relevance or emphasis towards the participant's experiences of what was being spoken about (Finlay, 2014; Rizq and Target, 2008).

3.5.4.3 Emerging themes

Once the commentary and interpretative coding were completed for each participant, emerging themes were identified from the data and noted in a margin on the transcript. This process began with the first participant and was subsequently completed with the following participants after. There was an attempt to capture a concise core of experience designed to combine the exploratory elements of analysis as a suggested step in analysis (Biggerstaff & Thompson, 2008; Smith, 2004; Smith et al. 2009).

3.5.4.4 Connections between emerging themes

Once emerging themes had been identified, they were also written up into an electronic copy of the transcript. Following this process, they were tabularised individually from the transcript with the corresponding line reference attached in the left-hand column of the table. Once completed, each individual set of tabularised emerging themes were printed onto colour coded paper. Each participant transcript was assigned an individual colour to provide a visual aide for identification (see Appendix Q).

Following this, each individual emerging theme line was separated into strips which could then be placed on a surface to create clusters of themes (see Appendix S)

As clusters of themes began to emerge, each emerging theme line was read alongside the transcript to provide contextual validity (see Appendix S). Lines that correlated in similar context remained within the cluster, whilst lines that did not appear to correlate were scrutinised and repositioned into a cluster that would fit best. Failing that, these emerging themes would be placed within their own space and a new cluster would be created.

This was competed for every tabularised set of emerging themes individually to maintain the ideographic element of the study (see Appendix T) (Smith et al., 2009).

3.5.4.5 Developing superordinate themes

Following on from the creation of clustered themes, these themes were again tabularised. At this point, clustered themes were looked over again to explore the essence of the cluster. They were titled appropriately and then printed to the paper that corresponded with the participant they derived from. This method was repeated for all participants.

At this point, clusters of master themes (see Appendix U) were created by grouping emerging themes together. Once grouped appropriately, these themes were then placed on a surface to create a sense of superordinate themes that summarised the experiences all participants shared (see Appendix V).

3.5.4.6 Final analysis

Following the completion of the analysis, a final review was conducted examining the emerging theme constellations and the superordinate themes that had been suggested to assess for accuracy (Brooks, McCluskey, Turley and King, 2015; Smith and Eatough, 2016). This was completed by reading through the transcripts alongside the review of themes to check themes matched with the quotes in the lines highlighted as suggested in Smith and Osborne (2003) and Smith and Eatough (2016).

Chapter Four: Analysis

4.1 Overview

In this chapter the findings of the interpretative phenomenological analysis investigating the experience of British Asian bisexual males are presented. Three superordinate themes emerged from the analysis of six semi-structured interviews.

Firstly, a theme of race described the various ways in which race had intersected at various points in the lives of participants and included themes of: (1) The dichotomy of being divided (2) The stink of early experiences of racism (3) I didn't know Bisexuality existed.

The second theme introduced elements of experience around growth in sexuality and included issues surrounding: (1) Configuring who I am, (2) the discomfort of categorisation (3) the desire of the exotic and (4) Understanding the formula.

The third theme introduced experiences of difficulty in finding one's self and how to address issues of sexuality within the family and wider community. It offers insight into (1) the frustration in engaging with family elders, (2) the toil for acceptance in the community and (3) the incoherence in sporadic connections.

Through the process of analysis, it became apparent that the experiences of the participants could be organised into a loose chronology that illuminated the various identities navigated throughout their lives. As the experiences of "Otherness and being othered," were discussed, it became more apparent that these experiences were felt through late childhood and adolescence. "Development and growth in sexuality," established narratives of sexuality and exploration over time through adolescence and into adulthood, and "The experiences and

difficulties in finding one's self," have arisen as a result of exploration of sexuality, which has left participants with some questions and some strategies on how to navigate their lives and identities.

These results can be viewed in the summary table below (Table 4.1).

Table 4.1 – Summary of superordinate and sub-themes with relevant quotation

Superordinate theme	Sub-theme	Relevant extract
Otherness and being othered	**The dichotomy of being divided**	*"we were always in a dichotomy as to - were we in an Indian culture? were we in a British culture?" – Varin (23-24)*
	The stink of early experiences of racism	*"I think it was when I was in year three errr an older kid called me the n-word," – Mithun (10-11)*
	I didn't know Bisexuality existed	*"And I didn't know anything about it and I didn't know or understand what being bisexual was," – Sukhjeev (346)*
Development and growth in sexuality	**Configuring who I am**	*"Erm I became more and more aware of how many people are not only like me but also feel the same as how I felt inside," – Nirupam (163-164)*
	The discomfort of categorisation	*"Growing up I was just unsure- should I, should I call myself bisexual? Am I gay? Am I straight?" – Nirupam (118-117)*
	The desire of the exotic	*"I have had relationships where I felt as though people wanted to date me just because I looked different," – Pardeep (573-574)*
	Understanding the Formula	*"It's almost like "Oh that's a thing? You can do that?" Mithun – (328)*
The experience and difficulties in finding one's self	**Frustration in engaging with elders**	*"But when you got sexuality issues affecting the individual, they don't want to know." – Taranjit (965)*
	The toil for acceptance in the community	*"There's this fear of oppression and persecution," – Varin (601)*
	The incoherence in sporadic connections	*"We don't have these words to articulate these things, so I'd be worried about that," – Mithun (610)*

4.2 Superordinate Theme One: Otherness and being othered

The first superordinate theme is reflective of participants thoughts and feelings around race and difference. It includes a sense of feeling difference in relation to race and experiences of racism in younger age as well as their thoughts and feelings regarding sexuality and their experiences of feeling unable to understand elements of their sexuality through the themes of (1) being othered, (2) the sting of early experiences of racism and (3) the wish for retrospective knowledge.

4.2.1 Subtheme One – The dichotomy of being divided

This subtheme explores participants' experiences of understanding difference from the aspect of race. The understanding of racial difference is indicative of their experiences of otherness and what it means for them to feel different from within their environment growing up.

> *"Erm, so I say I'd had a pretty normal in quotation marks er upbringing in the sense of it was a traditional er, Sikh family - immigrant family erm so from my perspective I was the third generation of my family from the UK erm erm and we had our erm sort of traditional family life which carried on as it was erm and we had – er and I had another life which went on which was my English life outside of the house really so it's a dual identity erm one of the issues I really remember was more about trying to understand my identity as to where do I belong"* – Pardeep (17-22).

Pardeep's experience of life growing up was indicative of attempting to understand the feeling of belonging, caught between two lives. He uses the words "traditional family life," and "life outside of the house," to invoke a sense of life in the internal element of the home and exterior to the home. Using the word traditional twice, he looks to emphasise a sense of

monotony which is continued in the following "carried on as it was." In contrast to this, he emphasised "another life," which is the life that went on outside and emphasises the duality of his existence. He continues to discuss that his feelings around the dichotomy of these two lives led to a sense of trying to understand his place or his "identity." There is a sense that he accessed different elements of himself according to his environment and adapted what was presentable accordingly. Teasing out further from Pardeep's life world, in indicating that he was from the "third generation[4] of my family from the UK," there is a logic that he had observed and internalised elements of how to be from his experiences as a young person, which could have included observations and understandings of "tradition," which he found less exciting than the possibilities of "another life."

Varin also invokes a similar sense of this duality through his exploration of his younger life:

> *"we were always in a dichotomy as to - were we in an Indian culture? were we in a British culture? Because erm, my parents – although my mother was born here my father was born in India. They still carried over some kind of erm, you know, traditional views on society and relationships and those kind of things"* – Varin (23-27).

Varin uses the sense of difference between his mother and his father, who have both grown up on either side of the diaspora as his reference to the difference in the home. He questions whether he was in an Indian culture or a British one but doesn't feel as though he is able to answer the question definitively. His explanation regarding their "views on society and

[4] Later confirmed as second generation.

relationships," goes some way to highlight they have an essence of convergence towards their outlook on life. Listening to Varin speak of this, highlighted elements of sadness or disappointment that his internal conflict regarding elements of his experience could not be explored when younger as these "traditional views," would have been difficult to challenge or explain to his parents. Varin indicates through his speech that "although my mother was born here," there is a deference to the cultural norms from his father who was "born in India," and a deeper indication of understanding his father's prominence in the family begins to emerge.

> *"I was one of the few Asian kids in my like classes and that- so it was (3) it wasn't – there was the odd occasion where I was reminded I wasn't white sort of thing you know [J: mmm] Errr, which I think is pretty- quite common but I wouldn't say I was bullied for my race or anything like that [J: Okay] Strictly but I think that there was always maybe like implicit things there more than anything and I think that I fitted in like my accent I could speak English I didn't have an accent and stuff like that so I think generally I fitted in overall but I think there was always that I think diaspora crisis [Mithun laughing]."* – Mithun (10-20).

Mithun speaks of his understanding of difference as located within the school setting and relates to being reminded "there was the odd occasion where I was reminded I wasn't white," which could be indicative of feelings around a lack of integration which were out of his control. He immediately draws an understanding of this from his experience of being at school and being "one of the few Asian kids," which offers both a sense of isolation and exceptionalism for difference.

He locates his sense of sameness to others as being able to speak English and "I didn't have an accent," but he then refers back to the sense of otherness as the "diaspora crisis," which

indicates that otherness is a critical element to understanding experiences of people who are raised where they may feel out of place. Mithun also indicates that he didn't directly experience racism, but highlights that otherness was "implicit," as an experience of his, which could be indicative of micro-aggressions that people of colour face when navigating life.

Sukhjeev speaks of a sense of feeling isolated:

> *"Like I grew up in a town where there's a- there's quite a dense Indian population but I grew up in an area that was like- mostly white [J: Yeah] The first (3) [Sukhjeev scratches beard] sort of ten years that we lived there I think we were the only Indian family within like three miles."* – Sukhjeev (16-20).

In indicating that he knew of a "dense Indian population," Sukhjeev knew that there were people outside of his immediate proximity that represented a sense of sameness but places himself externally to them through indicating he "grew up in an area that was like -mostly white." He invokes a sense of isolation by his understanding of being "the only Indian family within like three miles," which could indicate a feeling of frustration that being conceptually close to a dense populous of Indians although out of reach of an immersive experience was what it was like for him growing up. Through listening to the way Sukhjeev talks, there is a feeling that he seems surprised by his own experience of life as both close to and distant from the "Indian population," which he appeared cognisant of in the physical distance.

Taranjit, conversely, indicates that he found it difficult growing up to strike a balance between his racial identity and his feelings of wanting to live a westernised life despite

pressure from his family to adopt a more traditional upbringing:

> *"it's one of them situations in life and that, errrm, can be difficult, at the end of the day and obviously, especially obviously people trying to be westernised and as life changes and people n things change in front of you and that and people sort of bring culture to your face and that [J: mmm] And say that we should conform to being a Sikh and that, you question yourself and think, well yeah, I don't actually want to do that, so then you're in a difficult situation, of obviously finding yourself especially when you're third generation*[5] *and living in the UK."* – Taranjit (47-54).

When beginning to explore the experience that Taranjit spoke of, there is a sense of intense internal conflict in his experience of life growing up. Through the manner in which he talks of his understanding he explains that he experienced "people sort of bring culture to your face and that," which offers a strong sense of invasion of space and discomfort with the proximity of this invasion. In someone being in "your face," it offers a sense of present danger and indicates a feeling of subjugation that Taranjit needed to adhere to by "conform to being Sikh," as the qualifying sense of how to be. This dominant sense of how to be didn't take into account his feelings of wanting to integrate or explore different elements of himself and he goes on to indicate that when he states "well, yeah, I don't actually want to do that," which indicates an idea around defiance towards the dominant narratives of cultural conformity and led to a sense of Taranjit questioning himself and who he truly was despite an earlier sense of oppression from within his internal familial experience.

[5] Upon clarification, Taranjit is second generation

4.2.2. Subtheme Two – The stink of early experiences of racism

The second subtheme indicates that participants were aware of their experiences of racism and how it presented them with feelings of uneasiness and distress. Racism was and experience indicated by all participants except Taranjit, but explicit inferences of experiences of racism were given by Varin, Mithun and Sukhjeev.

Varin indicates that his experience of racism is tied inherently to cultural markers of food and the smells of cooking South Asian food:

> *"And if you go to school wreaking of shi- you know, onions or something like that, it's like 'well, you stink,' [laughs 1.5]"* – Varin (671-672).

Smells of fried onions are tied to the bases of most South Asian cuisine as they are part of the first layer of ingredients needed to infuse alongside spices. They release a pungent odour which can get trapped in clothing. Varin is exploring a sense of what it feels like to leave the home with this smell attached to himself in a negative context. He's expressive in his tone as he states "wreaking of sh-" but stops himself from completing the connection of this food to excrement - which is an unpleasant smell. He goes to on to express that he would have been told "you stink," by others and this would be a reminder of difference at school. There is a sense that Varin is exploring feelings of shame for this cultural marker, which could attack the olfactory senses of his classmates and offers a further element of difference to others around him. There is also possibility that this could be an indirect discussion around the practices of his parents in preparing Varin for the world outside of the home insofar as not accounting the way smells of South Asian foods are able to penetrate clothing, further

exposing him to the shame of being who he is from a racial perspective.

Mithun also explains an experience of racism that was directly linked to his life:

> *"I think it was when I was in year three errr an older kid called me the n-word which was really confusing cause it's like – it's not really the right [Mithun laughing 2] correct racism [J: Yeah] But also I felt you know hurt kind of thing"* – Mithun (53-57).

Mithun indicated that by "year three," or around the age of eight, he experienced his first understanding of direct racism by "being called the n-word," by "an older kid," and this is indicative of issues surrounding power. In knowing that it was an older person at school, there is a sense that Mithun felt a level of inability to challenge or understand the experience in any meaningful sense. He was aware that he had been directly discriminated against although he was also aware that he had been categorised as an "n-word," incorrectly, which he then describes as "felt, you know, hurt." It also indicated that Mithun could understand the intention of the words levelled at him. His laughter in the passage created a sense of knowing about the mistaken name-calling, but he acknowledged that this did not deter from the sentiment of the older child succeeding in wanting to emotionally hurt him for his otherness.

Sukhjeev indicates that between the ages of seven and eight, he also experienced racism directly:

> *"Yeah, so- seven or eight I reckon. (2) That must have been like my first incidences of*

> *racism [J: And what was that like?] Well that was my first understanding of difference it was like well okay, you're not the same as these people like you're not the same as your friends because y-you're different for something for whatever it is"* – Sukhjeev (46-50)

Sukhjeev offers insight in to how the experience left him feeling "not the same as these people," and explores a notion of otherness that centres around feeling different from his peers. He explores difference between himself and the people he classed as "friends," but further reading into this could indicate a sense of ambivalence towards his peers through the context of the experiences of racism he faced at a young age. There is a possible sense of confusion with the final line of the quote where he states, "whatever it is," and seems to indicate the child-like quality of inability to understand the rationale behind the sense of being different. He indicates initially that he feels an incident he is referring to is to now be considered racist, but at the time may have been an "understanding of difference," that he wasn't contextually able to name.

4.2.3 Subtheme Three – I didn't know Bisexuality existed

Talking about sex and sexuality whilst growing up was a theme that presented itself through the experiences of the participants. There was a sense that not talking about sexuality led to misunderstanding sexuality, which appeared to become pertinent as sexual fluidity was something that participants felt difficult to understand through their lives, beginning at a young age.

Pardeep indicates that through the process of reflecting on his life, he would have liked someone to have discussed bisexuality with him:

> *"As a child so if you'd said to me as- if I – if I go back I have to think about what would I tell the twelve year old me? [J: hmm] I would tell the twelve year old me about bisexuality erm there are people who are attracted to men and women and it's okay er it's not an issue erm (.5) but I didn't know it was something that existed at all I thought you were either gay or you were straight"* – Pardeep (57-59).

Pardeep refers to a sense of wishing to be able to speak to himself in childhood, so that he could explain and contextualise what being bisexual was in some sense, offering understanding to his younger self by saying "it's okay, er, it's not an issue," in a reassuring manner. The feeling that he wanted reassurance when growing up comes through this passage of speech. He goes on to state that he "didn't know it was something that existed," and as such only had dichotomous understandings of what it meant to be "gay or straight," indicating lack of knowledge around sexuality and sexual fluidity.

Varin also discusses his experiences of growing up without feeling as if he could discuss sexuality:

> *"in South Asian families, right, I noticed that there's not much really ever on discussion on sexuality. It's a largely ignored subject. It's very taboo to talk about it. It's very awkward, - if something even appears on television it's avoided, people get up and leave, you know, like the kids will get up and leave – it's just a very highly*

avoided er, topic. And so, for me, growing up it was erm, difficult because we- I had friends at school who would openly talk about these kinds of things and then, I was very shy to talk about these kinds of things [J: Mmm] and so, there were a lot of things that I was kind of battling with, growing up. Erm, when it comes to sexuality I was never really one hundred percent sure about what my orientation was [J: mmhmm] And there were times when it was challenging and you know them subsequently as I started getting older things started becoming more and more difficult because I had suppressed a lot of that" - Varin (44-58).

Varin describes a sense of shame that South Asian children connect with regarding sexuality and it becomes a topic that is "avoided," within the household with people leaving the room if there is any modicum of sexuality present. He feels as though this also is indicative of a sense of difference between his school friends and his own experience as they "would openly talk about these things," and he was "shy to talk about these things." The lack of discussion felt like a factor in not being able to understand his sexuality. The avoidance of the children in the earlier part of the quote could be a physical manifestation of his own suppression and possible avoidance of understanding his sexuality whilst growing up, which he vocalises at the end of the quote. He likens his experience to a battle and there is a sense that he was left on his own to battle through his issues of sexuality alone.

Sukhjeev says:

"Like I didn't know- I didn't have the language and I didn't know anything about it and I didn't know or understand what being bisexual was, like I didn't get it that you

> *could have physical and emotional attractions to people who weren't just like the opposite sex (2) and it's okay. I didn't get that bit- I didn't understand that it just- I didn't have that in my vocabulary and I didn't have it as a concept (1) you don't understand it,"* – Sukhjeev (236-240).

Sukhjeev speaks of not having the language of bisexuality and not having the concept of bisexuality during adolescence, which is then vocalised in quote by an explicit sense of not understanding. This is interesting in terms of how he places his understanding of bisexuality as he looks to have a linguistic and conceptual understanding of bisexuality in that order. When he speaks of not understanding his experience, there is a sense of frustration in his voice and could be viewed when he says, "I didn't," repeatedly through the quote, as if to emphasise the relief of understanding what bisexuality meant for him by eventually having the language.

Nirupam explores a sense that there is a possibility that parents not being able to explore topics of sexuality with their children come from their own experiences of being unable to talk about it:

> *"Yeah it's more of that talking about sex or talking about sexuality and it's just (1) because they've not experienced that or they've not had to deal with that erm and growing up in this sort of this day and in the UK as well where it's so- where people are so open about being er- being who they are"* – Nirupam (257-260).

Nirupam discusses a sense of not being able to relate to his parents through their experiences

of growing up as they have grown up in a different time to himself. He indicates a sense of difference both in time and in space “in this sort of day and in the UK,” as possibly a rationale into their avoidance of discussing issues of sexuality and being in a place “where people are so open about being er- who they are,” which feels as though it’s indicative of their closed off attitude to discussing sexuality, which is counteractive to the experience that Nirupam himself has in a society that is changing in its own attitude to sexuality.

4.3 Superordinate Theme Two: Development and growth in sexuality

The second superordinate theme considers the experience these participants had around resolutions of bisexual identities throughout the course of life and begins to develop a picture around assimilation of multiple identities through themes of (1) sense of understanding sexual identity (2) the discomfort of categorisation, (3) The desire of the exotic and (4) the relief of finding people like themselves.

4.3.1. Subtheme one – Configuring who I am

Self-acceptance was a theme all participants discussed regarding their experiences of bisexuality.

They all felt as if learning about bisexuality was a part of a process that allowed them to accept who they were for themselves, creating a greater sense of inner peace. This contrasts with the points made earlier in section 4.2.3 whereby not understanding bisexuality led to feelings of confusion.

Pardeep understands his self-acceptance through a process of self-development:

> *"So erm (4) so erm it took a while it took me to be able to er I say I had to go through the pain of coming out as gay first to myself and then to other people (2) erm and then (3) erm [hand on desk] afterwards I was like well erm actually its-er when I've done some self-development [bangs hand on desk] work I've talked [hand on desk] talked about books I've read and, and [hand on desk] groups that I've been involved with [hand on desk] erm I think I got to the point where I could just accept actually it doesn't matter who I am"* – Pardeep (347-352).

Pardeep explores the idea of coming out to himself as a painful experience before coming out to others and he resolved this by immersing himself in education and exploration. When he repeatedly hits the desk as he's talking it's as if he's emphasising the transformative, powerful impact that being involved in self-development brings. He expresses that "it doesn't matter who I am," in relation to his sexuality as he feels that sexuality as a name is only the beginning of the process. Self-acceptance and understanding are felt to be of a higher priority to him.

Sukhjeev explores the idea of tuning in to a sense of who he is over time:

> *"It's really interesting, because it sounds like a long journey, it's like- like you're configuring who you are, like turning a dial left to right to work out who you are, and you can set it somewhere in the middle [J: like a third position?] Yeah like a third way. I'm kind of okay with that. Since I've worked that out I've been a lot happier within myself."* - Sukhjeev (320-325).

Sukhjeev discovers a sense who he is through a configuration process of finding a place "somewhere in the middle," possibly indicating that he views bisexuality as somewhere in the middle that he feels that he is happy occupying. This could also be a reference to a sense of experience through life as being "somewhere in the middle," about his position his historical family as the middle child, yet the oldest son in the family. He says he is "happier within myself" having understood this is how he feels about his sexuality through his "configuration," of sexual identity.

Nirupam explores his sense of self-acceptance through exposure to the LGBT community:

> *"I'd say- I'd say it's more of a change in attitude erm (2) erm I think the more and more exposed to other LGBT I- I became and the more I learned about the community as a whole either through social media or the news [taps desk] (3) or other-other outlets [J: mmm] Erm I became more and more aware of how many people are not only like me but also feel the same as how I felt inside. [J: Yeah] And that- that really- that really gave some comfort in- that gave me some comfort erm in knowing that I wasn't alone (1) well I was by myself but I wasn't alone in feeling this way [J: mmm] Erm and that sort of helped me er (1) realise that I don't need to worry so much about it,"* – Nirupam (159-169).

Nirupam explores a change in attitude towards who he is and his feelings through his increasing exposure to the LGBT community. He recognises that there are other people who could identify with "how I felt inside," and expresses that a sense of kinship feels as though he is "wasn't alone."

Through this passage there is a sense of comfortability that Nirpuam expresses in knowing that once he had accepted himself through exposure to other LGBT communities, he was able to let go of some of the worry that he had been carrying.

4.3.2 Subtheme Two – The discomfort of categorisation

Identity labels was another topic around bisexual identity that participants discussed. There seemed to be some form of consensus that identities felt restrictive and essentialist to a

degree, failing to capture the experience of how it felt to be someone non-heterosexual.

Nirpuam expressed a sense of not wanting to label himself because it didn't feel as much of a focus for him to label his experiences of his sexuality:

> *"I've never really liked labelling myself too much but erm but I'm- I'm (1) coming to learn more and more about myself which is- which is helping me a lot erm but at the same time growing up I was just unsure- should I, should I call myself bisexual? Am I gay? Am I straight? It's –it-it was erm, it wasn't- it was erm It was tough for me to think- try-try and to focus on that because I wasn't heavily focussed on [J: hmm] My- my label erm in terms of my sexuality but erm I just, yeah it was- erm that bit was quite- it was tough on me [J: mmm] I'd often- I'd often question myself a lot erm, but going in to University I came-I kind of that sort of development of it's okay just no- to- not worrying about trying to- to put a name to it as such."* – Nirupam, (115-127).

He expresses how he felt unsure of what to call himself and how it felt difficult for him to think of himself in terms of bisexuality as a categorisation. There is a marked sense of uncomfortableness in his utterances when he talks about labels as if he is struggling to make sense of his experiences even during the interview. The experience of going to University allowed him a sense of freedom to not worry about a label and to focus on experiencing being happy which was his main focus.

Contextually, Nirupam is a practicing Jain and one of the five tenets of Jainism is

Aparigraha[6], which could be what he is experiencing through the discussion of labels and why he feels uncomfortable in discussing labels and their meanings to him. Aparigraha as a practice of non-attachment indicates that letting go of things which are not important is virtuous and this could be indicative of his growth as a person when he says "it's okay just no-to-not worrying about trying to- to put a name to it."

Sukhjeev expresses his thoughts on labels through a conversation he had with his friend's wife:

> *"My friend, his wife she said to me er, 'well, you know, no one really cares who you're having sex with – why do you have to go and disclose it to everybody,' and like I'm like well you live your life hiding, like if you're not heterosexual, you live your life hiding (5) and er (4) you- I just don't get it. Why? Why do you have to hide who you are? I don't tell people the sordid details of my sex life, it's not like that but, you can just openly turn around and say – yeah I'm Bi. [J: Yeah] And just move on with it or like 'yeah I'm gay,' and just move on with it. (3) And it can absolutely be a part of who you are but I don't really see it in that way I just- it's just an element of who you are but it shouldn't have to be hidden like it should just be part of a conversation. And when like my friend's partner said to me 'why do you have to tell anyone?' I said well if you ask then I'm going to be honest"* – Sukhjeev (280-290).

Through the discussion of understanding what a disclosure of sexuality and the subsequent idea of labelling is, Sukhjeev may be travelling through the idea of having a sense of

[6] Aparigraha = Non-attachment

integration about his sexuality. He pauses for a moment to think about what it means to be hiding as someone who is non-heterosexual but expresses that he cannot understand why, though his own thoughts are expressed later when says "if you ask then I'm going to honest." He goes on to say, "I don't tell people the sordid details of my sex life," almost through a sarcastic lens that indicates he doesn't place emphasis on acts of sex and doesn't want to be defined through them. He indicates that being bisexual is nothing to be ashamed of as it "can absolutely be a part of who you are."

Mithun tentatively tries to explain the way he feels within himself regarding a label of bisexuality:

> *"it's only really been in the last two or three years that I think I've actually thought of myself as Queer. I think I use the term Queer more just cause I don't erm know how else to put it- I like Queer just cause it's really- I feel like it's a term you can define yourself [J: mmm] I would say Queer and Bi-curious but I think Bisexual feels like it means something a bit more fixed [J: Mmmhmm] I think with Queer it feels a bit more like erm, yeah I mean like when I'm on dating sites I've messaged non-binary people and you know flirted and stuff like that whereas I feel with Bisexual it feels a bit more sort of fixed sort of thing but I think with my own feelings towards sexuality and stuff I think it feels good that I now am starting to think more broadly about myself and sexuality because I think for years I just didn't erm"* – Mithun (183-195).

Mithun explains and expresses his thoughts on a shifting sense of understanding what he feels it means to be bisexual. He indicates that he feels "Bisexual," is "something a bit more

fixed," and he repeats that sense of fixedness a second time in the quote. He feels as though this is not completely accurate for his sense of self. He suggests that this has come with his further self-exploration of his sexuality, which has allowed him to "think more broadly," and complements the manner in which he feels he can define himself through a sense of being more "Queer and Bi-curious."

4.3.3 Subtheme Three – The desire of the exotic

The third subtheme outlines that race is something that has continued to be present throughout the lives of the participants and intersects with their experience of being Bisexual. It indicates a sense of internalisation of feelings around what it means to be Bisexual and South Asian.

Pardeep explores the idea of what it's like to be fetishized when dating:

> *"But in the past I have had relationships where I felt as though people wanted to date me just because I looked different because it makes them feel good about themselves because they've got- they've got somebody on their arm that's different to everybody else"*– Pardeep (573-575).

There is a sense of novelty that Pardeep invokes about what it's like to be a trophy "on their arm that's different to everybody else," and through listening to the way he speaks he feels upset about this. He bases this understanding of what it's like to be a trophy through his feeling about looking different to other people his partners may have dated. "It makes them feel good about themselves," could be read in various ways around the notion of the exotic

other; the fetishized and coveted body to be explored by the colonising partner, the exploratory partner that views Pardeep as ostensibly a novelty or possibly the body that requires pity and salvation. There is a sense that because he is a Sikh and visibly looks like one – with a turban and beard, he offers a difference of being rare or unique as a person to be dating. There is a sense that he feels reduced or objectified due to his rare status much like an accessory. Further to this notion of what could be tied into how others used Pardeep's physical appearance is the concept of his status as an unadulterated being. Adhering to the practices of being Sikh offers non-verbal communication about Pardeep's conviction and possibly his sincerity which are prized when coming from a Sikh background.

Varin, conversely feels as though being South Asian is undesirable when dating:

> *"South Asian men from my experience are the bottom of the dating pool. South Asian girls are able to kind of get into relationships with guys quite quickly. South Asian guys are at the bottom of the dating pool unfortunately. They are not – they are still considered to be inferior in terms of – even in the gay community – amongst a lot of people. There's like people who would outwardly – outwardly – in the gay community – who would say 'don't message me if you're Asian because I'm not interested in Asian people,'"* – Varin (566 – 571).

There is a feeling of pain in the way Varin talks about his experiences of dating. Immediately, he stated that he feels that South Asian men are "at the bottom of the dating pool," and this invokes a sense of both futility and fatigue in struggling to find connection with someone else. He repeats the phrase again later adding "unfortunately," which highlights again the sense of struggle he feels in connecting to who he is as a South Asian male. He offers a sense

of having internalising both sexualised and racialised tropes around desirability and the relative ease with which South Asian girls can date if they want to.

He introduces the element of a sense of inferiority due to race when discussing 'the gay community,' and the ways in which South Asian men are rejected under the auspices of racial difference.

> *"it kind of plays in to what I was saying about not being good enough, like you are brown, so being in a crowd where you're LGBT, you're already a minority so you've only got a small pool of people to pick from so if you want to be in a gay relationship you've only got a small pool of people to pick from"* – Sukhjeev (478-481).

Following on from Varin, Sukhjeev makes a similar point about the experience of what it's like to try dating in the LGBT scene and how numbers of compatible partners are lower in frequency. At the beginning of the quote, there is an implied understanding that being "brown," is a discriminatory factor in possibility of finding someone from the "small pool."

Mithun reiterates the idea that he is South Asian to any potential people looking to start a relationship with him:

> *"it's one of those things that- it's been a bit hard to get into a relationship to be honest I think erm, like you know, with dating apps it's always a bit- I have to try and make it clear that I'm Asian just to be like red flag if you're racist [Mithun laughs] you know, move on sort of thing,"* – Mithun (704-707).

He explains that he's been finding it difficult to find someone whilst dating and puts this down to a sense that race is a factor that needs to be highlighted to stave off any possible racism he could encounter through dating apps. When Mithun states "I have to try and make it clear that I'm Asian," there is a sense that he is acting in a manner that is seeking defence of who he is and that emphasis on being South Asian is a "red flag if you're racist," because he is hoping not to subject himself to experiences of racism. He wants people to "move on, sort of thing," as a way of limiting the stressor of coping with negative response to him being in an online dating space.

4.3.4 Subtheme Four – Understanding the Formula

Religious and cultural resolution and the overall sense of relief through progressive religious and cultural engagement is another theme that participants spoke of. Regarding understanding elements of religion that could speak to their experiences and offer some form of understanding that sexuality and religion intersect in ways that affirm their identity, there is a feeling of hope that previously divergent knowledges about their sexuality and religion could be reconciled. Concomitantly, some participants found it difficult to find this same relief as their religious sentiments had no scope for reformation due to no experienced sense of recognition.

Mithun speaks of how researching online and finding people who were able to challenge prevailing attitudes to religion and sexuality was affirmative to his own experience:

> *"it's like seeing Queer people and seeing you know Queer pride parades in Muslim countries and also kind of seeing their battles and stuff like that you know I think a lot of it's shut down and stuff but just seeing people like- it's almost like "Oh that's a thing? You can do that?" like cause I feel like with religion I feel like it- what's the word[…] er, takes hostage of your sexuality it doesn't allow you to be you it takes you because you're in the 'club,' [air quotes] sort of thing and so you can't- it's almost like you're not allowed to define what your religion is because it's defined for you and if it's defined for you it also defines your sexuality so you couldn't- like in my head it was almost like physics where people write these formulas and I'm like "what the hell is this?" this formula of how you can actually be as a person [J: mmm] To be actually [hand on desk] going to mosques, praying, fasting, praying five times a day but also being Queer, also being in a same-sex relationship – like that was really like "We're allowed to do that?' [Mithun laughs] like I couldn't believe it"* - (Mithun 325-334).

Mithun begins the quote by discussing his feelings about seeing "Queer pride parades in Muslim countries" possibly as a way of comparing his own experience of not being able to publicly address or explore his sexual identity. He uses "battle," to convey his thoughts around what it means to challenge the sense of being "not allowed to define your religion" as part of his personal experience growing up, which adhered to dogmatic practices of reading and learning religious scripture.

Seeing this challenge to his previous understanding of religion, there is a sense that he understands "Oh that's a thing? You can do that?" as a different experience that he himself wishes to practice.

Mithun recognises that he has found this a personal challenge to understand however, when

he states “In my head it was almost like physics where people write these formulas and I’m like “what the hell is this?”” and this could also be seen as part of his battle to resolve the elements of himself that he previously could not see working together. Towards the end of the quote, there is a feeling that he is beginning to understand the “physics,” problem and this offers a sense of shock, but also hope in a permissive sense when he asks rhetorically “We’re allowed to do that?”

Similarly, Varin discusses how he has sought other forms of Hinduism which are not as traditionally dogmatic in their sense of understanding sexuality. He speaks of becoming part of a movement that is now discussing issues of sexuality within his religious background:

> *“And that discussion has opened up amongst er, religious organisations – especially like Bhakti[7] movements, which is a little bit separate from classical Hinduism because Bhakti movements is a non-caste based process of worship, and Bhakti is kind of interwoven into traditional Hinduism – but it is it’s own entity, it is not restricted by certain rules and things like – it doesn’t confine people [J: ye-yeah, yeah] Bhakti is a kind of mystical path which opens up, an-and amongst those schools of- spiritual schools they have a lot of discussion taking place about whether, you know, homosexuals should be allowed, this that and the other, you know, whether homosexual marriages should be allowed so this discussion is very kind of, you know the current news of places like this where they’re kind of still trying to reconcile with classical ideas and other ideas, and so in one sense some parts of you know classical faith.”*- Varin (387-298).

[7] Bhakti = A reformation of Hinduism focussed on devotion to religion without any specific emphasis on caste.

Varin explores his understanding between classical Hinduism and more reformist movements like Bhakti, which seem to indicate that he is exploring and understanding the elements of self that previously seemed to be incompatible regarding his religion and his sexuality. He says "it doesn't confine people," possibly in alignment with the way in which he feels his sexuality doesn't confine him to heterosexual experiences. He indicates that "they're still trying to reconcile with classical ideas and other ideas," possibly as an indicator of how he himself is also trying to reconcile these parts of himself.

Nirupam also explains his feelings towards his religious and sexual intersections:

> *"Erm I mean I-I've always (2) being identified as a-a Jain erm I've always held the tenet of Ahinsa[8] which is non-violence to anyone and erm I've-I've kind of taken that on to be quite accepting of other people and erm internally I've not felt a conflict between me being Jain and me being Bisexual,"* – Nirupam (545-548).

Nirupam is able to understand his sexuality in relation to his religious background as non-conflicting through the concept of Ahinsa which he explains as "non-violence to anyone," and it could be felt that what he means by this is holding an accepting view that sexuality is not something to exert a form of control over another person for. His feeling is therefore explained further when he states, "I've not felt a conflict between me being Jain and me being Bisexual."

[8] Ahinsa = Non-violence, non-injury and absence of desire to harm any life forms.

Sukhjeev explores his interaction with religion through his understanding of the lens that Sikhism takes with regards to sexuality.

> *"Sikhism doesn't really talk about sexuality. It doesn't really talk about sex, err, sort of er, procreation [J: So, sex is about procreation?] Yer-yeah er, yeah it's about being in a family, that's kind of the purpose of it you procreate and you erm, you lead a good life and that's it like you don't really erm, you don't really deviate from that script as it we-r-so this is what you do that's really sort of, that's really sort of heteronormative (1) you like you have a family, that's what you do. Two-point-four-children, and when they grow up you teach them how to be a good Sikh*" - Sukhjeev (329-336).

Sukhjeev explores and exposes some of his own frustration with how Sikhism doesn't explicitly state there is any direct challenge to sexuality and sexual practice but is informative in its emphasis on "being in a family," and how that assumption is "really sort of heteronormative." He indicates this frustration through the phrase "you don't really deviate from that script," which could be indicative of his own experience of being a heteronormative relationship and not feeling as though there is enough to challenge this notion of heteronormativity within the religion due to its vague nature regarding sexuality.

He goes on to suggest:

> *"Sikhism doesn't have anything like that its far more focussed on the way you're living your life an- more based on how you be which is what I try, and it's sort of*

about finding inner peace in the things that you do like in order to find God so we don't have things about sexuality in Sikhism," – Sukhjeev (346-349).

The resolution of sexuality and religion appears to be highlighted in this passage where Sukhjeev says "it's far more focussed on how you're living your life an- more based on how you be which is what I try," which seems to highlight a sense that Sukhjeev doesn't feel a direct discrepancy between sexuality and religion that needs to be resolved, but that he feels as if there is an emphasis on being a better person regardless of his sexuality.

This sense of focus seems to be something that Pardeep can also relate to:

"We're not in the same place as other faiths where we-we are specifically are condemned in any way in the scriptures erm so we're in a better place but we're not necessarily in a better place because there's no recognition for us at all [hand on desk] so that I think is a bad thing," - Pardeep – (444-447).

Pardeep seems to also feel frustrated about the lack of discourse within Sikhism around sexuality because "there's no recognition for us at all," and this frustration is emphasised in the way in which he audibly puts his hand on the desk before continuing "so that I think is a bad thing." He feels as though recognition in other religion is something that brings about discussion and resolution within his faith. Pardeep also recognises the relative privilege of sexuality in Sikhism in not being "condemned in any way in the scripture," but there is an overarching sense of ambivalence in the way this lack of discourse has left him with a resolution that is not completely satisfactory.

4.4 Superordinate Theme Three: The experience and difficulties in finding one's self

The third superordinate theme centred around discussions within the wider family and the ethnic and religious communities the participants came from in relation to sexuality and their understanding of the pitfalls in discussing sexuality in South Asian communities. They discussed and identified key themes centred around (1) Frustration in engaging with family elders, (2) the uphill struggle for acceptance within the community and (3) disheartening feelings of disrupted connections with family.

4.4.1 Subtheme One – Frustration in engaging with elders

This subtheme is concerned with the sense that community and family elders are unable or unwilling to understand issues of sexuality and what it can mean for the participant. The participants indicate that there is a sense of denial within the family and wider community about issues of sexuality in South Asian communities and concerns itself as a theme around elements of discourse that affect the wider community and the closer family unit.

Taranjit suggests that there is some understanding that elders feel their knowledges around sexuality are inadequate, but there is also a reluctance to adapt:

> *"I think for the older generation at the end of the day, they know things are backwards in the community as a whole, I mean my ma-mar my massar*[9] *and that, he's [REDACTED] and that, and he knows things are changing in the community, but the thing is you don't acknowledge it. They talk of, you know, they talk about HIV, you talk about drug addiction - the causes of that, they accept that because it's an*

[9] Massar = Husband of maternal aunt

addiction issue, but when you got sexuality issues affecting the individual, they don't want to know." – Taranjit (960-965).

Taranjit experiences the wider community as "backwards," possibly as an indication of narrow-mindedness regarding the topic of sexuality. He explores this through the example he gives of his massar and Taranjit's sense that his massar "knows things are changing," but there is a sense of stubbornness that he exudes around issues of sexuality because it's not viewed as an addiction such as "drug addiction," or a sexually transmitted disease such as "HIV," and there is a sense that sexuality is more taboo than either of those issues. It could be possible that Taranjit is expressing his understanding of his uncle's frustration at not being able to adapt to new knowledges and resultantly, dismissing issues of sexuality because his massar knows he needs to change when he says "they know things are backwards in the community as a whole." There could also be an implication of an understanding that addictions and sexually transmitted diseases and infections have answers whereas issues of sexuality are more abstract with comparatively difficult resolutions.

"How would I be able to justify this in terms of, erm, amongst all the South Asians who based their ideas based on faith and religion? How would I be able to like, you know, be able to fit in and be accepted? How would those traditional, you know, ideas of the nuclear family, you know, where you have this kind of cornflakes box version of a family – parents, two children, one boy one girl kind of idea – How would the, how would the homosexual person be viewed in those circumstances? In fact, what I would find is that they would be made a huge mockery out of because Asian people in

general are hugely sarcastic people, especially Punjabis." – Varin (463-470).

Varin indicates that to compete against the heteronormative assumptions of the "cornflakes box version of a family," the wider community and the family would make "a huge mockery out of," someone "because Asian people are in general a hugely sarcastic people," and this possibly indicates that he feels it would be difficult to discuss issues of sexuality within a wider context. Varin indicates his own worries using a rhetorical question he asks about how he would be able to fit in to the wider community if he were to live as a "homosexual person," possibly meaning being viewed through the lens of being in a non-heterosexual relationship he would face personal ridicule. Linguistically, through the passage he explores these concepts through invoking himself and other people in his speech, possibly as an attempt to verify that his feelings about these discussions are more universal than individual.

Pardeep explores his feelings around a wider discussion within the community and his perception that being LGBT is ignored within the community:

"the key thing I think from my perspective as I say the biggest challenge is the religious community [hand on desk] it's the fact that LGBT people are ignored erm so they need to start understanding that within- within the Sikh community just as within the wider community [hand on desk] at least ten percent of people will be LGB at least and maybe more four percent more might be trans-se-transgender erm it's just something that they need to become acutely aware of erm (2) it'll be so it'll be interesting when they wake up to that challenge" – Pardeep (681-687).

Pardeep indicates that he views the ability to have wider discussions within the community as

a challenge which he repeats twice in the quote. He feels as though there is a reluctance to accept or "understand" that there are LGBT people within the "wider community," and then offers statistical information that he feels validates his position of being "ignored." When he offers statistics, it could be understood that he is exploring the idea that a sizable number of the community is being ignored by their community and this is something that he feels is unsustainable "when they wake up to that challenge,"

4.4.2 Subtheme Two –The toil for acceptance in the community

The second sub-theme in this category concerns itself with cultural stigma and explores the different senses of cultural stigma that affect South Asian males who are bisexual. Between the participants there is a feeling of arduousness that coalesces around an idea of a long, isolated journey that they are on, fraught with the pitfalls and danger of personal and familial injury - leaving them with a sense of fatigue from worry about both physical and psychological injury.

Taranjit explains that if he were to openly express himself as a gay man (that is to be seen in a non-heterosexual relationship openly) he would worry about the wider Sikh community and how they would react to him:

> *"It's a journey, it's not going to be an easy journey. Seen as a [Taranjit uses air quotes] 'gay man,' now, living in the Sikh community I have fears of being who I am at the end of the day because I can't be seen out with my partner in the community because you'd get beaten up and all the rest of it, you, you, you might be living as an openly gay man and that, but you're still living in denial because the community has a strong hold over your possibilities. And then you're put in the situation where, I can't*

go to the temple with my partner, holding hands and be openly in love with him, because it's frowned upon." – Taranjit (633-642).

Taranjit invokes the sense of the arduousness of the journey to change attitudes within the community he lives in. He is part of a community that is predominantly South Asian and the manner in which he says "I can't be seen out with my partner in the community," opens up a sense of understanding that there is shame in "living as an openly gay man," or "be openly in love with him" that will take a long time to counter-act through the long journey that he is on. There is also a very real sense of danger he invokes by stating "I have fears of being who I am" in relation to living in a closer proximity to a South Asian community which invokes a further sense of anxiousness around living in an "openly gay," relationship.

Varin also discusses his feelings about a sense of shame in being able to discuss his sexuality as a long and arduous task:

"how does anybody do that? How do you, where do you start? You know, when you don't really know – and then if you've got guilt that's built up over the years of things that have happened in your life and you feel that you can't speak to somebody about it because there's this fear of oppression and persecution for example – there's this unknown fear that's not even warranted that – people think the worst or assume the worst – so who – how can this be dealt with and reconciled amongst South Asian guys?" Varin - (598-603).

Varin understands this sense of community stigma as an inability to speak to people within the community for a fear of "oppression and persecution," which indicates a very real sense of threat once again. He asks rhetorical questions to himself at the beginning and end of the quote, which is indicative of a sense of wanting to be able to answer the question of how to go about addressing the cultural stigma that he finds present, but it also feels as though he is not able to conceptualise a beginning due to the enormity of the task. He talks about the "guilt that's built up over the years," of exploring his sexuality that could lead on to persecutory acts from the community.

Mithun says:

> *"I think- it's also like if I came out and everyone in my community found out I wouldn't be able to go to weddings or if I did I would just think I would be- no one would even talk to me which would be a relief or they'd start cussing me out or whatever so just- so that would be weddings, functions, mendhis[10], err birthday parties, all sorts of things I would just literally just be cut out- and to be honest that doesn't really bother me that much cause I sort of- I get annoyed with Bengali culture and stuff like that and people- it's just more my family"* – Mithun (639-634).

Mithun discusses his worries over cultural stigma through a more concrete sense of understanding that he would be "cut-out," of the community which he then goes to state "doesn't really bother me that much," whilst also recognising that the stigma would be redirected towards his family.

[10] Mendhi= pre-wedding party

Pardeep also invokes this sense of feeling that it is not himself that would feel the consequences of his decision to be in a non-heterosexual relationship, but his mother who would:

> *"I think she understands it but the difficulty again that she has is that again there's nothing positive- there's nothing spoken about at all so you know so everything about Sikhism and in the Sikh community is all about what everybody else is doing [Pardeep's hand on desk] (2) 'I haven't seen anybody else who has got a gay child yet you know,' and 'why can't you be different like that,' so 'what will my friends think if I tell them that,' ' what will my family think,' you know those sorts of issues,"* – Pardeep (782-787).

Pardeep mimics the essence of the conversations that his mother has with him and this opens the experience of what it is like to have discussions with her around sexuality. The first "I haven't seen anybody else with a gay son," is possibly indicative of a sense of failure that his mother feels towards the community for not having a strictly heterosexual son. There are other elements that could be tied into this statement such as Pardeep's divorce from his marriage, which is also something stigmatised in South Asian communities. "what will my friends think if I tell them" also highlights a possible external locus of evaluation that Pardeep's mother has. Pardeep's hand slapping the desk is an audible and physical manifestation of his frustration and it arrives prior to his imitation of his mother's speech, which is indicative of his frustration with the cultural stigma that is attached.

Nirupam expresses that he feels as though community conversation about being LGBT would be a way to challenge attitudes around sexuality within these various communities:

> *"I think there needs to be a lot more open discussion between people (1.5) I felt especially as part of my family part of my community we don't talk about that at all [J: mmm] And we don't talk to other people from the LGBT community and it's-it's a lot of – a lot of notions around sex and sexuality is is- not – there's no open talk and that's where – that's where things – it's more of a being uncomfortable or being awkward erm - rather than-not which leads to not understanding,"* – Nirupam (243-249).

Nirupam invokes a sense of isolation in the community with an inability to reach out to other minority groups to open discussions about intersecting issues. He senses as though not discussing due to a feeling of being awkward is what leads to not understanding sex and sexuality further.

4.4.3 Subtheme Three – The incoherence in sporadic connections

The third subtheme explores the sense of difficulty in communicating with the family around concepts of bisexuality and sexual fluidity.

Pardeep explains his experience of discussing bisexuality with his mother in the past as something which is difficult due to linguistic barriers:

"When you've got to communicate these messages to somebody else in your own language that can be challenging, and we talked earlier about the fears that you have and everything else that goes with it [J: mmm] Another challenge I had was having to tell my mum I'm bisexual I didn't know how to do it because I didn't know any of the words in Punjabi for it [J: mmm] I don't think my mum probably never came across a gay person or knew what being gay was erm, so (2) it's been a case of my sister and I having to use err erm er explain in very simple terms the best that we can [J: Okay] So it becomes really challenging to be able to do it when we don't really share common language in that sense" – Pardeep (757 -765).

Pardeep explores a sense a sense of trepidation in trying to explain bisexuality and what it means for him to be bisexual when he says "we talked earlier about the fears you that you have" regarding the feelings of worry in coming out and what that could mean for his family in a wider context. He goes on to indicate a sense of frustration in not sharing "a common language," through attempting to explain how he felt in Punjabi. He explains that he had to use "simple terms," in order to try and allow his mother to understand what it meant for him to be bisexual.

Mithun also explores the sense of not being able to explain conceptual ideas of bisexuality to his wider family:

"I think also with my family in Bangladesh as well, err, I just don't- I feel- I feel like they couldn't handle tha- they couldn't take it [J: Your family in Bangladesh as well?] Yeah if they (2) cause people you know gossip you know it'd be them straight away- I

almost wouldn't know how they'd even explain that [J: mmm] Cause I don't know what the word is for Gay or Bi or Queer I don't think they- In Bengali like I don't- somebody told me one once but I don't think it would be Gay I think it would be 'off,' something like you know we don't have these words to articulate these things so I'd be worried about that" – Mithun (601-610).

Mithun feels as though articulating his feelings around his sexuality would be something, he would not be able to do adequately. Mithun explores the idea of the concept being lost in the translation to his family through the use of the word "off," – possibly like the sense of something being not quite right, and this could be indicative of Mithun rejecting the concept of him being "off," through his sexuality. His over-arching sense is felt to be that he would be misrepresented or unable to account for himself in his family.

Taranjit explores what it was like for him to discuss his sexuality with his father now:

"My dad said to me 'well I can't change your thought process now because you're [REDACTED] years old, you've lived half your life now, be who you want to be. But, you deal with the shit. [J: mmm] But not saying, this is what I'm about to go through, dad, and where my journey is and this is where I am. For someone who's a Sikh person, or even an Indian when you go to your parents and say 'well actually, dad I'm actually a "gay man," this is what it is,' [J: yeah] It's hard for them to deal with because they don't understand it because of a lack of education that they've received.
- Taranjit (1106 -1113).

Taranjit explains that he was not able to articulate “this is what I’m about to go through, dad, and where my journey is, and this is where I am,” as a process of his explanation of his sexuality and his current feelings towards his partner. He explains to his father that he’s now in a gay relationship by indicating that he is now a “gay man,” but then goes to state that his dad could not understand what being bisexual means because of a “lack of education,” which Taranjit possibly feels as though he is not able to address. He explores his father’s own sense of frustration when he repeats his father’s words of “Be who you want to be. But you deal with the shit,” because of Taranjit coming out following the breakdown of his marriage and strained relationship with his children at the time.

Chapter Five: Discussion

This section identifies the summary and main conclusions that can be drawn from the research project. This section will include a summary of the previous analysis section, and results of the analysis will be provided. It will be followed by discussion of key results this research provides for therapeutic practice, and methodological reflexivity. The section will conclude with researcher limitations and suggestions for future research.

5.1 Overview

This research aimed to provide insight and depth into the life-world experiences of British South Asian Males who self-identified as Bisexual (BSAMB).
The research was conducted by analysis of semi-structured interviews conducted with six participants and analysed using an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) methodology.

Existing research regarding this demographic of participants was extremely limited, with literature either conflating experiences under a broader demographic of "men who have sex with men," (MSM) or "gay and bisexual men." This is possibly due to the difficulty in reaching males who self-identify as bisexual from South Asian communities in numbers more conducive to research and analysis.

This research study was aiming to provide a deeper insight into the experiences of this demographic of people to explore their experiences so that practicing psychologists and counsellors could be aware of issues that could arise when working with BSAMB cohorts.

It must be acknowledged that the results of this research study are only relevant to a specific

sample, however, under the methodological assumptions of an IPA, gaps in research literature and due to the nature of the research area, it was only sought to explore the experiences of this demographic of people for that reason.

5.2 Research summary and implications

As a result of the research findings arising from the data analysis, three superordinate themes appeared through the data analysis; (1) Otherness and being Othered (5.2.1) (2) Development and growth in sexuality (see 5.2.2) and (3) The experiences and difficulties in finding one's self (5.2.3).

To understand the literature and the theoretical implications it may be worth revisiting the original research questions asked, which were:

1. What is the experience of being Male, Bisexual and British South Asian?
2. How do these people make sense of their experiences?

In line with IPA as a research methodology (Smith, 2011; Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009) data analysis as presented in this research study was the result of direct engagement with the data as collected through semi-structured interviews.

As opposed to an *a priori* hypotheses being tested through research questions and a close relationship between the answers and questions being maintained through the data collection - adhering to the epistemological stance of IPA - themes were identified and explored through the data collected from the interviews and studied to find superordinate themes that emerged

from the data with no prior anticipation.

5.2.1 – Otherness and being othered

The first superordinate theme explored experiences of otherness and othering. The initial subtheme highlighted idiographic instances of discomfort through being deemed 'the other,' and was closely related to the second subtheme of early experiences of racism. The third subtheme explored notions of how discussions were unsuccessfully negotiated if at all within the family around sexuality, and how this distanced participants from both their peer group and their family. This builds a picture both ideographically and between the participants that issues of identity were not significantly explored in the participants life worlds as they were growing up, setting the stage for seeming out of place.

The third subtheme initially appeared to be less closely tied to the first two subthemes, however, upon further analysis and reading, displayed an element which was like the first two in content that was not initially apparent. Talking around experiences of race and racism, there was little indication that experiences had been shared or explored further with parental figures, and in much the same way, talking about sex and sexuality was avoided.

Through not talking about sexuality, there was an expression of a lack of knowledge about sexuality and in the context of this research study, bisexuality was not discussed at all. Not talking about sexuality at a younger age left participants wanting to address their adolescent feelings of not knowing, shyness, and conceptual deficiencies when discussing issues around both race and culture, and sexuality.

This current study confirms existing research as follows;

Previous research literature regarding South Asian diasporic experiences to understanding issues of race and culture from interaction with the family indicate that dialogue within the family at a younger age offers a sense of preparedness for issues of race and culture that could present themselves externally (Daga and Raval, 2018; Iqbal, 2014). What this research study found in relation to previous research literature indicated that as participants explored notions of race and culture in their early lives, their preparedness for issues around difference was influenced by the ability of their parents to discuss issues of discrimination with them. However, the experience of speaking to parents about issues of race were rarely mentioned (once by Mithun) and it was noted that other participants did not disclose speaking to their parents about issues of race, discrimination or racism at a younger age.

However, Daga and Raval's (2018) research findings indicated that themes of being a model minority – defined as ethnic minorities in multi-ethnic countries that are likely to achieve economic and academic success with low crime involvement (Chou, 2008) - fed negatively into the experiences of children who were presented with expectations of being model minorities. In line with the previous research, the experiences of the participants in this study highlighted that being subjected to model-minority narratives were a part of the experiences of growing up and led to disconnection between the participants and their family groups (4.2.1) through the discourses of being a model child.

Moreover, when younger South Asians do not conform to model minority expectations, they are exposed to ethnocentric ideologies of their environment and experience further segregation (Crozier and Davies, 2008) and this research study concurs with those previous findings through the discussions that participants engaged in regarding their experiences of marginalisation through ethnic or cultural markers, which were used in amplification of

difference such as the experiences of Mithun and Sukhjeev when discussing racist abuse and marginalisation at a young age.

Further to this, in a study exploring South Asian adjustment attitudes it has been indicated that children of South Asian parents who identify more strongly with their cultural heritage rather than adopting more integrated cultural attitudes show less psychological wellbeing, although within normal variation boundaries, than that of their White British counterparts (Iqbal and Golombok, 2018). There is an observation within this research study that older participants (Pardeep and Taranjit) spoke of ways in which their families were more strongly aligned to their cultural heritage and as such there were more notable distinctions in their cultural assimilation practices. Taranjit explored this through his understanding of the attitudes of his father and his family elders regarding his being outed and Pardeep explored this in terms of how his mother was subjected to scrutiny from the local community due to his divorce, and in both of these instances, the parents of these participants were older and were discussed as being more insulated in terms of their integration with the dominant culture.

The experiences that participants in this study explore are also in line with research that indicates schools are the most common places where children experience racism and discrimination (Mansouri and Jenkins, 2010) however, the participants did not indicate that they were drawn more strongly to their religious and cultural ties as a result of these experiences.

The current study provides some new insights into the experiences of BSAMB; Robinson (2009) explains, there is little empirical evidence about how South Asians navigate

their cultural spaces (Ghuman. 2003; Robinson, 2007) and are subsequently faced with conflicts between their differing cultural frames (Fordham and Ogbu 1986; Mendelberg, 1986). Whilst Daga and Raval's (2018) research indicated that children who engaged in the academic arena as a manner of achieving success were adherent to model minority narratives, this research found that South Asian Male participants engaged in academic education as a vessel to continue their personal development and identity formation. The participants who were educated to university level (Pardeep, Nirupam, Mithun, Sukhjeev and Varin) all discussed how they used their educational opportunities and their new environment as manners to explore their racial and sexual identities further whilst those that did not (Taranjit) engaged in personal development strategies that followed on from education in order to integrate their multifaceted identities.

This research found that whilst there is a separation of cultural frames, there is a conceptual understanding of a duality in the interior home environment and exterior outside environment of the participants. Participants understood that there was a difference between the geographic locales of the home and the outside, which held stark contrasts and occasionally was made apparent in their discussion of how there was an experienced boundary between what was outside and what was inside the home. Whilst this is not novel, themes occurred around boundary exploration and boundary transgression that were.

One instance of the exploration of the exterior appeared to be in the geographies of the participants through themes of relative proximity to other South Asians (such as in the talk of Taranjit, Mithun and Sukhjeev,) who all explored ideas around proximity to groups of South Asian people and how this could have affected their experiences of life both in the positive and negative.

The second theme of note was how the interior permeated into the exterior and the repercussions of that through the olfactory sense. The notion that smells could be worn, out of the relative safety of the home and into the exterior environment created senses of threat which were explicitly stated by both Varin and Mithun and were strongly alluded to by Sukhjeev. In all instances where smells pertaining to South Asian food were mentioned, there was a sense of shame that participants were exploring as though they were wearing something else that differentiated them from their peers.

In further exploration of how this could be interpreted through therapeutic work there is a sense that parents who were cooking foods in the home were not aware of the implications of doing so, insofar as they would be contributing further to discriminatory and exclusionary experiences as expressed by these participants.

Although there is previous literature on discussions about sex and sexuality between adolescents and parents (for review, see Dilorio, Pluhar and Belcher, 2003) which indicates topics of discussion range between menstruation, birth control, sexually transmitted disease (STDs) and pregnancy (ibid), messages and discussions around sex and sexuality appear negative or cautionary (Ward and Wyatt, 1994) and emphasise adverse outcomes (Darling and Hicks, 1993; O'Sullivan, Meyer-Balburg and Watkins, 2001). This research indicated a novel finding in terms of how discussions with parents about sex and sexuality were not conducted, possibly due to cultural norms that were part of the life experiences of the parents of these participants.

In terms of clinical practice, these findings could be particularly useful when discussing concepts around how internal and external lives of British South Asian Males interact in

therapeutic practice. There is a sense that although these participants have been subject to, and also enact separation strategies, the interior world of their homes and the exterior world of the wider society infuse and permeate one another through transgressions such as taking the smells of the home into a world which interprets them as hostile or through the introduction of narratives around sex and sexuality from the world into the home, which would not be acknowledged or actively avoided in discussion.

Previous research literature indicates and highlights that development of identity is an important factor in adolescent growth (Marcia, in Adelson 1980; Waterman, 1985) and elucidates that identity is a "self-definition comprised of those goals, values and beliefs that a person finds personally expressive, and to which he or she is unequivocally committed," (Waterman, 1985, p.6). This study indicates that participants being able to explore facets of their identities which they may have wished to express, such as elements of their sexuality did not seem possible and subsequently, the participants engaged in identity formation practices that were partially borne from this inability to express themselves.

Research has also indicated that adolescent South Asians acculturation practices fell broadly along the lines of integration strategies rather than complete assimilation or rejection and separation strategies (Ghuman, 1999; Robinson, 2009). In disagreement with previous research, this study indicates that the participants engaged in separation strategies rather than integration strategies. There appeared to be a clear distinction between the world outside of the family and the world of the family in the ways Pardeep, Varin, Sukhjeev and Taranjit spoke during their interviews.

Regarding this research project, there is a sparse knowledge of sexuality socialisation that

occurs in South Asian contexts, as expressed in previous literature (Kim and Ward, 2007). Kim and Ward (2007) found that with relation to discussing topics of sexuality in a study of pan-Asian (South and East Asian) second generation Canadians, mothers were more attentive to discussions of sexuality (Menstruation, Dating norms, Necking, Fertilization, Sexual Intercourse, Pregnancy, Birth Control, STDs, Abortion & Homosexuality) than fathers in relation to girls, and significantly more attentive to boys in discussions of menstruation, pregnancy and homosexuality. In contrast to the previous research, this research study found that South Asian parents did not engage in discussions around sex or sexuality with the participants through their ideographic accounts of childhood experiences around it. Varin discussed that he was able to have an open discussion with his mother at a later age and disclosed that he was not heterosexual, and Sukhjeev explored the concept that his mother knew that he was not heterosexual as a teenager but did not discuss his sexuality with him. In relation to clinical practice and therapeutic practice, it could be of importance to be able to tentatively discuss issues around sex and sexuality with British South Asian Males (who may or may not be bisexual) as this research indicates that discussions of sex and sexuality with parents were taboo, something to be repressed, or conceptually embryonic due to a lack of discussion and awareness.

5.2.2 – Development and growth in sexuality

The second superordinate theme explored experiences of growth in sexuality and how participants navigated various aspects of their lives. They discussed issues surrounding understanding and framing their sexuality in ways that were congruent, how categorisation felt to them, how they experienced the intersection of race and sexuality and how they experienced finding social groups that were accepting of who they were.

Participants indicated that self-acceptance came through gradual integration of their sexuality and their religious and cultural heritages; achieved through exploration, configuration and exposure to literature which affirms their identity or through making use of online spaces where they could further explore who they are.

Through exploration and interpretation of their own sexuality, participants had conflicting ideas on categorisation, holding some form of ambivalence towards being labelled - as if categorisation missed an essential element of being.

Race also appeared to affect the lives of the participants at a later stage in life and interacted with sexuality as participants became older and exploratory in their sexual practices. Participants indicated that they felt fetishized or denigrated through elements of their ethnic identities, and these were multifaceted experiences.

Further to the first subtheme in this grouping, which explored assimilating internal elements of the self for a more cohesive feeling of being, the final subtheme explores external elements of integration, as the participants speak of finding religious and cultural elements that are progressive in their stance towards people who are not heterosexual.

This study confirms; Preceding research has explored how sexual orientation and identity development of ethnic minorities are a unique challenge due to experiences of individual and institutionalised racism (Harper, Jernewall and Zea, 2004; Wilson and Harper, in Patterson and d'Augelli 2013). The results of this research would confirm the previous findings in so far as experiences of racism appeared to transgress the borders of sexuality. All participants discussed in some way or form their experiences of racism and how they felt they were

treated, either as fetishized or denigrated ‘other,’ in line with elements of the previous superordinate theme, which could possibly indicate that race is a moderating factor of experience in BSAMB.

An underlying element of the discussion that was brought to the fore by some of the participants were around internalisations of race rhetoric and feelings of worth which aimed to position them in a hierarchy of race which would seem to map onto previous research indicating that people from European backgrounds express preference in dating which places Asian (undefined) people in an intermediary position when compared to European, Hispanic, African or Arabic peoples (Potârcă and Mills, 2015).

Research on the experiences of British South Asian (specifically Muslim) experiences of the “gay scene,” (Jaspal, 2017) indicate that access to Lesbian Gay and Bisexual (LGB) resources are difficult due to the perceived threats of racism and exclusion (Choi, Han, Paul and Ayala, 2011; Jaspal and Cinnirella, 2012; Han, 2008; Das Nair and Thomas, 2012) and this seems in line with the experiences of some of the participants who discussed their own strategies for coping with threat to racial identity from within the LGBT+ community, through proactive strategies to mitigate interaction with people who could be racially abusive toward them.

Sexual othering in both instances of acceptance or rejection lend themselves to a power dynamic and configuration where people of ethnic minority and sexual minority status can be eroticised and devalued based on their external differences (Munoz-Laboy and Severson, 2018; Said, 1978, 2004) and thusly create tensions intra-psychically – resulting in internalisation of a lower sense of self-worth (Jones, 2000) through interpersonal experiences

or internalised racism. This research study seems to confirm that this is true.

Similarly, previous research has indicated that there is a lack of ethnic community and cultural acceptance of sexual difference (Wilson and Harper, 2013), possibly due to attitudes that sexual difference violates traditional ethnic and cultural values and rules (Chan, 1995; Harper et al., 2004).

Amiot, Sablonniere, Terry and Smith (2007) propose a four-stage model of identity development and posit integration begins intra-psychically and becomes integrated within the self-concept, and suggests that the better one is able to conceptualise their various identities as compatible, the higher this level of integration will be (Jaspal and Cinnirella, 2010; Benet-Martinez and Haritatos, 2005; Cheng, Sanders, Sanchez-Burks, Molina, Lee, Darling and Zhao, 2008). The strategies that participants in this study indicated helped in their identity integration, suggested involvement in LGBT groups and spaces, finding spaces online, reading appropriate literature and allowing time to think about their sexuality aided in a sense of understanding themselves in terms of their sexuality and their religious backgrounds. Participants spoke of engaging with reformist religious sects or finding online support through videos, online communities and charities, or through environmental change in the instance of those who had gone on to develop such strategies at University.

Previous research on identity labels indicates that younger cohorts of LGBT people avoid identity labels as defined by Savin-Williams (2006) due to what is conceived as the "post-identity phase," where assimilationist politics have overtaken deconstructionist and Queer forms of protest (Anderson and McCormack, 2016; Coleman-Fountain, 2014; Ghaziani, 2014). Current discourses on sexuality and terminologies can also be considered problematic

when discussing people from non-western ethnic origin backgrounds (Banik, Dodge, Schmidt-Sane, Sivasubramanian, Bowling, Rawat, Dange and Anand, 2019). Participants in this study seemed to indicate that "Bisexual," as a label or category appeared to miss some qualitative element of being, with multiple participants questioning their own use of the label of "Bisexual." Possibly, this was due to a non-academic understanding of the politics of bisexuality in a western or Eurocentric context or the various definitions of bisexuality that are more expansive in their inclusion (see Plurisexuality or Bisexual Umbrella, Galupo, 2018; Barker et. al, 2008) rather than a closed off or binary definition, which appeared through the talk of Taranjit and Pardeep in particular, although this could also be explained due to difference in age between Pardeep and Taranjit and the other participants as there was a significant age difference, in line with previous research.

The discussion around categorisation in this study indicates that bisexual as a category or terminology is not one that is completely expressive of the experience of self-identified BSAMB. There is a dearth of knowledge as to why this could be, but there may be indication in previous research that identifies that western categorisation of sexuality is not congruent with non-western peoples in the context of the Indian subcontinent (Banik, Fisher and Anand, 2014; Boyce and Khanna, 2011; Khan, 2001). Yet, there is little information on the experiences of diasporic South Asians and how the interaction between cultural integration practices affect their attitudes to sexuality in non-heterosexual situations.

There is also a growing set of literature that looks to understand how processes of religious and sexual integration work and can include changing religion, reduction in religious participation, changing denominations or altering beliefs or relationships to beliefs (Brennan-Ing, Seidel, Larson and Karpiak, 2013; Dahl and Galliher, 2012; Shuck and Liddle, 2001;

Garcia, Gray-Stanley and Ramirez-Valles, 2008; Rodriguez and Ouellette, 2000; Yip, 1997). Some ethnographic research into pedagogical strategies used to integrate religion and sexuality in an Islamic context (Shah, 2016) has also considered the ways in which Muslim people interact with Islamic teaching, choosing to directly consult source material and challenge religious authorities by engaging in the fissures and ambiguities of the texts and finding integration there (Kugle, 2003; Beckford, 2001).

In relation to this research study, it was found that participants engaged in strategies that were predicated on reformation of relationship to religious beliefs through deeper contextual readings of their religions and challenges to narratives through consultation with the source materials. It appears that due to this interaction with religions in a more intimate fashion, participants were able to identify positive and affirmative elements of parts of their religions and in one instance was able to find a more reformist demarcation that was inclusive of non-heterosexual orientations.

Previous research has indicated that use of the internet within male sexual minority groups in the United States are helping people to become educated on issues of same-sex sexual behaviour, sexual orientation identity development and sexual health promotion (Kubicek, Carpineto, McDavitt, Weiss and Kipke, 2011; Mitchell, Ybarra, Korchmaros, and Kosciw, 2013; Mustanski, Kuper and Green, 2013) although research in the United Kingdom researching the same is sparse, and further to this, there is not any present research on how BSAMB interact with the internet in their sexual identity exploration. With regards to the findings in this research, it was understood that some participants engaged in using some online spaces in relation to sexual education and sexual orientation identity reformation strategies. Three participants spoke directly of their interactions in online spaces and how these spaces could be used to positively encourage personal identity development through

positive role modelling stories which they viewed. They also spoke on shared online community which created a counter-narrative around feelings and thoughts of isolation.
A novel finding in this research seems to indicate that there is a difference in the ways in which participants from a Sikh background discussed their feelings towards their religious identity and the interaction with their sexuality. In contrast to the ways in which Varin and Nirupam discussed sexual orientations as fluid or present, or how Mithun described sexuality through reformation discourses he was discovering online – the Sikh participants expressed concern and frustration in a lack of discourse around sexuality. Their discussion centred on how, as sexuality was not expressed in religious teachings, it was difficult to argue the relevance of sexual orientation save for the concept of the Anand Karaj[11] expressing the delineation of the male and the female in relation to God when two people are wed and the importance of that delineation because of its rarity.

5.2.3 – The experience of finding one's self

The third superordinate theme explored experiences of difference and finding one's self. The subordinates from this superordinate theme explored a wider discussion around the experiences of participants when interacting with the wider community. Participants touched on themes of frustration in not being able to express themselves in manners that family and community elders could understand or accept.

In the first subtheme, Taranjit, Varin and Pardeep discuss issues around the wider community with the greatest coherence and indicate that the attitude to difference regarding sexuality would be met with resistance in forms of denial, ridicule and ignorance. They speak of the

[11] Anand Karaj = Sikh wedding ceremony

way the wider religious community do not appear to have the appetite to challenge heteronormative assumptions on sexuality and as such the participants indicate their despondency with their elders.

The second subtheme focussed on the ideographic discussions centred on a feeling of arduousness in making any positive changes at present with regards to discussing sexuality as an element of who they are in their wider community. Individually, participants express a sense of feeling alone in a long journey, however, they are also aware of the myriad threats, both physical and psychical that could manifest because of any attempt to address their experiences.

The third subtheme explores how participants also indicated that explaining elements of their sexuality is also difficult due to lack of ability to express themselves in a manner that is understandable from their family's perspective or in a way that the family could conceptualise. Participants expressed a willingness to want to discuss their sexuality with their parents and immediate families but indicated that partial resistance is identified due to an inability to verbally express their feelings in a manner that could be understood appropriately.

Failure to experience a positive reaction to coming out can result in negative outcomes such as homelessness, risky behaviour, depression and self-harm or suicide (Cochran, Stewart, Ginzler and Cauce, 2002; d'Augelli, Herschberger and Pilkington, 1998; Ray and Berger, 2007; Lui and Mustanski, 2012; Rosario, Scrimshaw and Hunter, 2012; Whitbeck, Chen, Hoyt, Tyler and Johnson 2004). Through this research study, there was evidence that would continue to match with these previous findings. Participants discussed issues of risky

behaviours such as illicit substance misuse, feelings of low mood and depression and being made homeless as well as fears of being made homeless as a result of disclosure of sexuality.

Shame by affiliation is also a less well studied phenomenon in the research literature, but preliminary research into aspects of the psychological impact of stigma encountered by family members of LGBT individuals (Robinson and Brewster, 2016; LaSala, 2010) could play a part in their own interactions with LGBT people (Jones, Brewster and Jones, 2014). Societal stigma against LGBT people is fed by "society's shared belief system through which homosexuality is denigrated, discredited and constructed as invalid relative to heterosexuality," (Herek, Chopp and Strohl, 2007, p.171). Previous literature also identifies that people who associate with stigmatised individuals may also experience this stigma (Corrigan and Miller, 2004; LaSala, 2010). In relation to this research study, it has been found that participants did discuss their experience of their parents in relation to their disclosure of sexuality. What was indicated through participants discussion were the effects of coming out to parents and what coming out meant for them in a communal social group setting. Pardeep for example discussed the ways in which his mother had been affected by his divorce and subsequent coming out; through community ostracization and gossip – resulting in shame and upset being feelings she identified with from the external community.

Chrisler (2017) reviews the various models that have been used to understand parental attitude to LGBT disclosures, including the adaption of the Kubler-Ross grief model (Anderson, 1987; DeVine, 1984; Robinson Walters and Skeen, 1989) which posits that parents reach acceptance of identity following stages of shock, denial, anger and guilt; adaption of Bandura's social-cognitive theory adapted by Bowen, Crosbie-Burnett, Foster and Murray (1996) which focuses on adjustment considering individual and contextual

factors of the parents; or family stress theory, suggesting that parental reaction is predicated on (a) family resources, (b) the meaning placed on child sexual identity and (c) the number of stressors in the parent's life (Willoughby, Doty and Malik, 2008; Willoughby, Malik and Lindhal, 2006). In relation to the previous research and theoretical literature, elements of all were found in the talk of participants and how their parents and families reacted to disclosure of sexuality. Taranjit expressed how his family engaged in denial, anger and upset when the found out about his sexuality and enacted an intervention to give him an ultimatum due to the nature of his personal family dynamics and family matrix. Mithun and Varin discussed what disclosure of sexuality could mean for the wider community and how this could affect their family resources in the future. Mithun discussed how his own developmental family resources could be affected by the wider community and family due to their relative social standing in the Bengali community.

Previous research indicates that parental attitudes to disclosures of sexuality are important towards the wellbeing of the child (Chrisler, 2017) and depending on the reaction of parents towards children who disclose sexuality there can be positive outcomes resulting in improved self-esteem and overall health, reduced substance misuse, and lowered risk of depressive symptoms of children who disclose (Espelage, Aragon and Birkett and Koenig, 2008; Ryan, Russell, Huebner, Diaz and Sanchez, 2010). What this research study indicates that in the adolescent experiences of these BSAMB, they were unable to discuss thoughts and feelings around their sexuality in any fashion that could be deemed beneficial for their wellbeing. Resultantly, due to the nature of how sexuality was not discussed and explored with these participants, they engaged in strategies that included denial, substance misuse or suppression through voluntary celibacy under religious edict.

Because of this investigation, and as a novel finding, it has been understood for these participants at least that the challenge of explaining bisexuality is made harder by linguistic and conceptual deficiencies that they are not able to appropriately overcome. Previous research by Bhugra (1997) indicated that parents are amongst the last people to be informed of sexuality and an issue of linguistic capability across two languages could be a possible reason as to why.

Experiences of shame and guilt have been explored through research literature in relation to non-heterosexuality but are met at the intersection of focus on women and female experiences of upholding honour (Yip, 2004; Siraj, 2018; Gunasinghe, Hatch and Lawrence, 2019) and often refer to the concept of izzat[12] in a South Asian context.

Far less explored in the literature is the concept of shame or izzat from the experience of men or males in the British South Asian diaspora. Participants in this research study touch upon issues of family honour and shame without explicit usage of the word izzat, and therefore it may not be relevant to discuss in terms of this specific phenomenon – however, shame and guilt were issues that were discussed by participants in terms of their own interpersonal experiences with members of the family and the wider community and this in itself is a different finding.

Research on challenging the assumptions and cultural prejudices of elders in South Asian communities is sparse. Jaspal (2015a, 2016) suggests that the use of ESOL classes as sites of introduction to discussions around sexuality could be viewed as a manner to enter discussions around non-heterosexuality and religious homophobia tentatively. Similarly, Rahman and Valliani (2016) also suggest combatting homophobic attitudes within a religious and cultural

[12] Izzat = South Asian concept of honour and family honour

frame by using wider conversations in order to humanise the subject and making visible the invisible peoples of these various intersections (Bisexual, South Asian, British and Male in the instance of this research). Through discussions between participants in this study, there was a sense of worry or fear that there would not be a way to change the minds and opinions of an older generation of British South Asian elders and the focus shifted towards the future. Discussions from participants who had been or were married and with children, recognised that they would need to be the people to enact changes within their community and the way in which they foresaw enacting change came from educating their own children and becoming involved in LGBT+ activism or movements. Discussions from participants without children centred on activism and involvement in LGBT+ spaces that nurtured their integration and acceptance and using this as support for working within their religious and ethnic communities for people who wished to express their sexuality in the future.

5.3 Summary of novel findings and additional findings

In relation to findings within this research project that confirmed or contradicted previous research findings, there were four novel findings that were discussed as part of the research process, and they will be summarised as:

(1) The majority of BSAMB participants engaged in academic education as a vessel to continue personal development and identity formation.

(2) Separation of cultural frames and the duality of the interior and exterior of participants life worlds were discussed, with permeation from one setting into another experienced as dismissive and potentially harmful.

(3) Discussions between groups of BSAMB were qualitatively different between groups based on religious understandings around sex and sexuality. Whereas participants from Hindu, Jain and Muslim backgrounds discussed sexuality and therefore acknowledged sexuality discourses, Sikhism did not, and this led to feelings of frustration for the Sikh participants.

(4) Linguistic and conceptual understandings of bisexuality from a western perspective are developing in participants and as such are difficult to explain to parents and elder members of the familial groups for these participants. These participants have recognised that there is not an easily translatable understanding of bisexuality that they can convey to their elders.

In addition to the themes found across the cohort of participants, there were additional observations found in the phenomenological aspects between groups of participants who were or had been married (Taranjit, Pardeep and Sukhjeev) and those who were not (Varin, Nirupam and Mithun). Through further research and understanding of literature, there is a possibility that this is due to a Sikh tenet of faith called *Gristi Jiwan*,[13] (Gyani, 1962) which signifies the importance of married or settled life as a Sikh person. Gristi Jiwan is a conceptual understanding that married persons are an atomic element to a community, and if they are happy and stable then their community can remain happy and stable. This could be observed as a possible rationale for convergence in their experiences.

In reading this through a Western academic perspective, there is an understanding that Sikh participants were discussing their experiences through a heteronormative lens as they had all experienced life inside an observed heterosexual marriage. In line with previous research

[13] Gristi Jivwan = the life of the house holder

there was an interesting observation that the Sikh participants were still either married or divorced and in settled relationships, and adhering to elements of heteronormative practices (chiefly, monogamy) despite the gender of their partner, which is a phenomenon found in previous research studies with US-Latino bisexual men (Muñoz-Laboy, Garcia, Wilson, Parker and Severson, 2015).

Taranjit for example, discussed how his estranged wife thought it would be possible to seduce him back into their marriage, but he stated that he felt at the point of no return due to the manner in which their marriage ended, and due to the new relationship with his current partner, he was looking for a way to finalise their divorce which would be amicable. He stated that he found it difficult to speak to his children about his new partner, and conversations with his wife around the relationship his children would have with his partner were strained.

Pardeep stated that he was happy in his new relationship with his new partner and his divorce was better in the long term for himself and his children. He detailed that he did not hide his relationship with his partner from his children despite the protestations of his ex-wife, but instead has included them in his new life. He mentioned that his daughter has accompanied him to a Pride march and was involved helping him discover more about his new sexual identity through further education.

Sukhjeev stated that he was happily married in his relationship with his wife, but that he would and could acknowledge that he had sexual feelings and wants that he would make note of. He stated that he felt as though he would remain monogamous happily because of the

strength of the relationship between himself and his wife.

5.3.1 Additional findings.

Some of the findings in the data analysis are in line with the previous research literature, however, findings as part of the data analysis within this research study suggested some unexpected results that could have larger implications for practice, going forward.

There were an unexpected set of finding in terms of the study as the interview questions were primarily centred on the interaction between various forms of identity and the experience of the interaction between these identities from a personal and interpersonal perspective. Through interviews, an issue appeared to present itself in and around the ways in which participants highlighted their experiences of the wider community in talking about sexuality; they are met with perceived resistance that participants have picked up on, and primarily seems to originate from community elders or those within positions of authority within the community.

Participants touch on issues of cultural stigma and the effects of cultural shame on themselves and their immediate families which could be amplified through the relative isolation that South Asian communities experience from wider society in the United Kingdom.
As some of these issues presented in the emerging themes, it would be prudent to focus on these issues to assess their implications for future therapeutic practice. These emerging themes are; (1) The incoherence of sporadic connections, (2) The toil for acceptance in the community and (3) The discomfort of categorisation.

5.3.1.1 – The incoherence in sporadic connections

In exploration of the life worlds of the participants in this study, it became clearer that disclosure of bisexuality to parents and family members can be mired by an inability to appropriately express one's sexuality. Previous research literatures seem to omit this from discourses in coming out to family as the focus has often taken linguistic capabilities or parental conceptual understandings of non-heterosexuality as given. In examination of the intersection of British South Asian Males who are Bisexual, it has been highlighted that this needs further exploration, and future research could be developed around understanding (a) when and how positive communication has occurred in disclosure of bisexuality between diasporic children and their parents (b) developing appropriate strategies in order to allow for conceptual understanding of non-heterosexual identities and sexual orientations in cross-cultural instance and (c) providing appropriate psychological support for delivering cross-cultural and inter-generational education of non-heterosexuality (and explicitly bisexuality in the instance of this research study).

5.3.1.2 – The toil for acceptance in the community

Tied to the previous concept of exploring linguistic and conceptual understandings of bisexuality in a cross-cultural and inter-generational manner, research and development of culturally attuned psychological services aimed towards providing support for families of people who are LGBT from the South Asian diaspora could result in greater positive outcomes for British South Asian people regarding their sexuality. It could be understood that diminished feelings of shame by association could be tackled with appropriate development of a culturally aware family systems intervention that could be adapted from existing models of intervention or developed outside of existing models.

5.3.1.3 – The discomfort of categorisation

Something that was unexpected but became a key finding in this research was the discussion around categorisation and the relative discomfort participants had in holding bisexual as an identity. There is a possibility that western terminologies aren't congruent with South Asian diasporic peoples that consider themselves non-heterosexual. Further to the points above (5.3.1.1, 5.3.1.2) it could be understood from the participants that came forward for this study that although they self-identified as bisexual, there remained a qualitative ambivalence towards 'Bisexuality,' as the identity label they would be happy with, much rather the identity that they were most comfortable with.

Further research into why this ambivalence occurs could be a possible avenue.

5.3.2 Application of critical realism to the research findings.

In consideration of the results of the study through a critical realist lens, there appeared to be some convergence around the experience of participants not being able to vocalise or translate their feelings and thoughts into ones their parents or wider community could understand.

Critical realism works through the properties of ontological realism (meaning there is a reality independent of one's knowledge), epistemological relativism (meaning personal knowledge is conditioned through prior social and historical knowledges), and judgemental rationality (meaning logic can be applied to determine if certain theories are more relevant than others) (Wikgren, 2005).

In thinking about the results of this research study from a critical realist lens, there appears to be an underlying sense that independent reality is denied or suppressed for the participants of this study approximately at the age that they would naturally become exploratory around their

understanding of sexuality.

There is independent reality of sexual fluidity, and people who express sexual thoughts and feelings which are not heterosexual in nature, and in the instance of this research study, bisexuality (in myriad forms and definitions) exists independently of the knowledge of participants or their family members. Repeatedly, the ideographic experiences of all participants in this study indicate that discussions around sex and sexuality as British South Asian Males were not explored during adolescence and were often actively admonished when discussions of their bisexuality were made conscious.

Through the conditioning of these participants in relation to the knowledges they were provided with as adolescents in social engagements they were denied elements of who they were, which were found through subsequent self-discovery. This denial arrives in the form of a lack of language and discourses around sexuality, which affects these participants in two ways:

(1) it prohibits the participants of this study from engaging in their own reality.

(2) it embellishes a violence of exclusion which had already been established through discourses of race and racism in the external worlds of these participants.

From a counselling perspective, inability to engage in one's own reality can lead on to false self-development (Winnicott, 1965) and the subsequent defensive functions required in order to hide a true self (ibid), borne from the repeated failures to meet the demands that are needed to foster a true self. Participants in this study who indicated that they were engaged in compliance with their families wishes and environmental demands engaged in defensive strategies in order to hide and satiate their true selves, which were only able to appear in later life through retrospective discovery. Examples of this could be found in the conversations

that Taranjit, Pardeep, Varin and Mithun engaged in surrounding their experiences of familial life and sexuality as taboo or unexpressed and unexplored.

Resultantly, this could be construed as a process of shame, which has been discussed by Porges (2011) in a four step-model that consists of (1) shock – consisting of consequence of response by a significant other (2) drop – threat to safe connection (3) shame proper – the state of hyperarousal characterised by a loss of energy, motivation and interest (4) dissociation – a dissociation response (which could over time develop into structural dissociation). (See Porges, 2011 for further information).

Participants who indicated an ability to discuss feelings and thoughts around their sexuality were able to express far more integrated considerations of self through their discussion. This can be understood from the manners in which Nirupam and Sukhjeev discussed identity integration in their talk.

Similarly, participants who had their existence as non-heterosexual acknowledged through their religious identities either negatively or positively, were able to express themselves in terms of the dialectics of historical and reformist religious understandings of sexuality that arose out of their enquiry into religious discourses.

Benau (2017) discusses these elements of discussion, dialectic, and the ability to self-correct shameful experiences as "Good enough me shame," (Benau, 2017, p.10) in reference to Winnicott's (1953) "Good enough mother," and Bowlby's (1969) concept of the internal working model and secure attachment process.

In attempting to understand the violence of exclusion that these participants were able to express, counselling perspectives on race and racism also indicate that people are taken from

the position of a “whole and useful person, to a tainted and discounted one,” (Goffman, 1968, p.3) and that the experiences of being racialised markedly alter a person’s sense of self, expectations and ambitions and fears (Fanon, 1962) and is reinforced by histories of domination and colonisation (Aboud, 1988).

This can be viewed and indicated in the expression of the participants of this study through their experiences of racism, summarised phenomenologically as carrying an oppressive stink around with them, or through their experiences of being othered in early life through to their adult romantic experiences – either positively through the exoticisation or negatively through experiences of racism in dating and the subsequent internalisations of that shame which could also understood through Porges (2011) four-step model of shame.

5.4 Applications for clinical practice

The current study could provide some valuable insight into how BSAMB could present in the clinical arena and the information Counselling Psychologists may need in order to work therapeutically with BSAMB. Whilst there is previous research literature which can elucidate experiences of bisexuality, and separate research on working with British South Asian Males, previous research literature is sparse in relation to working with this specific population of people. Through exploration of the issues that have emerged from this Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, there are topics that could be of value to explore in therapeutic work.

(1) Understanding that “Otherness,” is a possibly compounding experience of shame for BSAMB through societal pressures of shame due to external experiences of racism and internal familial pressures of shame through non-heterosexuality, which can lead on to false-

self narratives and experiences of ambivalence in therapeutic work.

Previous research literature explores issues of multiple minority stressors (Bowleg et al., 2003) but this research study has indicated that there could be an additional issue surrounding multiple minority shame elements that lead on to issues around suppression of true self (Winnicott, 1958; Mollon, 2002, 2005; Benau, 2017).

Further to this, there could be an understanding that the ambivalence and avoidance strategies created as a result of maladaptive connections (Bowlby, 1969; Ainsworth et al., 1979; Benau, 2017) could present within the therapeutic encounter, and practitioners may need to be aware of how this affects the therapeutic work. Mohr and Fassinger (2003) researched how attachment relationships and subsequent relational styles play a mediating role alongside wider socio-cultural factors on the distress that Lesbian Gay and Bisexual people face, and in light of the results of their research project, this study suggests some convergence that experiences of life as a BSAMB could be stressed due to earlier experiences of insecure attachment and relational deficits.

(2) The experience of creating language and subsequent thoughts around sexuality through positive exploration of this topic can lead to better integration of identity.

As part of the result of this research, there is an understanding that without sufficient language, there is insufficient ability to think about the feelings involved in exploration of sexuality and in the case of this research bisexuality is not a conceptual idea that these participants had whilst growing up. Due to their feelings around how sexuality was not discussed and therefore how the realities of these participants were denied, they experienced exclusion from religious, cultural and societal frames that could have aided in better

psychological wellbeing.

Additionally, linguistic and conceptual understandings of bisexuality for participants in this study were in embryonic stages and participants discussed their thoughts and feelings about bisexuality largely from a gendered binary series of expressions save for one participant who indicated interest in dating non-binary partners as well as people who identified as men and women.

(3) Reformist religious and cultural discussions are a possible positive manner to explore identity integration.

Through discussion with participants within this research study, and as part of the ongoing understanding that dialectic opportunity allowed for further discussion and reformation of identity, it could be indicated that positive reformation of personal identities could follow from reformist religious and cultural perspectives towards sexuality for BSAMB. Practitioners working with BSAMB clients may need to understand more surrounding the nuances of the religious backgrounds of these participants and the dialectical positions that are taken from both orthodox and reformist religious perspectives in order to aide participants in discovery of themselves in relation to their religious background. In the context of Sikh people, this may present as more difficult than those from Hindu, Jain or Muslim backgrounds due to the lack of discussion and subsequent lack of recognition of issues of sexuality from within the Sikh religion. As Hinduism, Jainism and Islam hold positions on non-heterosexuality there have been subsequent discursive opposition and due to these fissures, participants in this study have indicated that they have been able to find support from a community base that represents them culturally and sexually.

5.5 Evaluation

Evaluation of this research project follows through a methodological reflexive statement, a post-analysis reflexive statement written in first person, and limitations that were found during the study.

5.5.1 Methodological reflexivity

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis was considered for this research project because it was felt that this methodology would provide some valuable insight into the subjective experiences of the participants that were involved. Under the assumptions of IPA concerned with idiographic experiences (Smith, 2015; Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009) the results and analysis provide a detailed examination of a specific group of people who are not easily able to discuss their experiences of being British, South Asian and Bisexual. IPA can, however, aide in further exploration and understanding that could lead to greater claims and subsequent theoretical implications being made for future praxis when working with this client group (Smith, 2015).

During the transcription and analysis stage of the work, there was an attempt to block out and address the researcher assumptions as much as possible (Pietkiewicz and Smith, 2014) however, it is understood and addressed that this was not entirely possible and is discussed in greater depth in post-analysis reflexivity (section 5.5.2).

5.5.2 Post-analysis reflexivity

This section will also be written partially in first person narrative, outside of the general conventions of the rest of the thesis. The reflexive statements in the Introduction (see 1.2, 1.3

& 1.4) were made at the beginning of a process of placing myself in relation to the participants and the study as a person, a counselling psychologist doctoral candidate and as a researcher. Following on from the analysis of the data that came from the interviews, time was also spent exploring the data from a reflexive standpoint, using elements of a reflective journal, supervision and personal therapy.

This statement is orientated towards review of the methodology, analysis and findings of this thesis. Throughout the process and as recommended by Smith et al., (2009) I have kept a reflective journal, engaged in supervision and through my own therapy I have attempted to reflect on my own assumptions and beliefs about the world, bisexuality, masculinity, religion and experiences as a therapist. I had attempted to bracket these assumptions as best as I could to minimise the influence on data collection and analysis (Smith et al., 2009).

During the transcription, close reading and analysis process, random anonymised selections of transcript were offered to peer researchers to discuss interpretation and re-evaluate possibilities in notation. Feedback was also sought from supervisors in the initial process, who indicated that closer and more thorough reading and notation was needed to be conducted on my part, which was then implemented. Because of this, the focus was aligned to remaining as close to participant accounts as possible when interpretations were made. Further to this, in additional supervision regarding the outcomes of the analysis and findings, further reading was suggested regarding my own sense of ambivalence and my identification with the participants of the research.

During the process of interview and analysis, I expressed some concern around the data which I had collected. In one instance, I felt as though I was not able to extrapolate as much

relevant information as possible from the interview transcript, but this resulted in my revisiting the data to explore further what was being said and to understand that although the process of interviewing had concerned me, I would be able to extrapolate relevant data.

In conducting this research, I was alerted to the difficulties in immersing myself in a research topic that was close to my own identified experiences of being South Asian, second-generation and bisexual. In multiple instances I found myself identifying with the same ambivalences that my participants accounted for in their own experiences; that of being part of a diaspora both in terms of race and sexuality (Laungani, 2004; Page and Yip, 2016; Rouhani, 2016) and engaging with communities that harboured their own insecurities through the process of migration and integration. That identification with ambivalence was something I considered when understanding my own avoidance in conducting the write up of the research and engaging critically with the work in a way that mimicked some of my own attachment issues brought up in personal therapy (Bowlby, 1969, 1979; Bernard and Goodyear, 2004; Fleming and Steen, 2013; Pistole and Fitch, 2008).

With regard to how this in turn affected my stance in relation to my phenomenological position, I found myself in the place whereby I very much wanted the voices of the participants to come through and illuminate the phenomena that emerged as a result of my reading of their material. In attending to the balancing act of explaining the phenomenological aspects of what I had found I did not believe I could do the phenomena as much justice as the words of the participants themselves. Through IPA's understanding of the idiographic position (rather than the nomothetic), this seemed an ample opportunity to establish some of those phenomenological themes through the personal accounts of the participants (Harré, 1979). In picking out some of the greater length passages, the example of

Mithun's speech around understanding a formula (4.3.4) was an exceptional highlight of how it felt to be completely frustrated to the point of trying to understand the puzzle of a physics formula that all of a sudden made complete sense, and the utter relief that came with solving this equation. The phenomenological theme itself held an expression of how it felt to finally understand an intersection between faith and sexuality and in some instances this was a cause for celebration (as in the case for Mithun), whilst in others it was a cause for frustration (as in the case for Pardeep) because experiencing this phenomenon highlighted the deficiencies in denying discursive interaction in what could be regarded as a moment of emancipation for all.

I also found myself reflecting on the initial emphasis of the study, which in part was to explore and understand some experiences of bisexuality. Through further reading, I spent time attempting to understand the political connotations of identity labels when interacting with participants and data. There was a tension that was realised when interviewing participants about what it meant to hold an identity label such as "Bisexual," which has some historical and political connotation around sexual object desire (Gooβ, 2008; Rouhani, 2016) in relation to a label of Queer or Queerness that could subvert and transgress terms which felt constricting to participants (Layton, 2000; Erickson-Schroth and Mitchell 2009).

In spending time thinking about why this could have occurred, it appeared that there is an issue around attaching further identity labels to one's self when there is already a distinct set of minority stressors (Kimmel and Mahalik, 2005) that South Asians (of all genders) live with. Visibly, there is an identifier which was touched upon by all participants regarding ethnicity and the experiences of being deemed to be the other at a young age, through experiences of difference and racism (Clarke, 2018; Dwyer, 2000; Fanon, 1965; Jaspal, 2012)

and those internalisations could explain some understanding of reluctance to adhere to another identifying label (Bowleg, Huang, Brooks, Black and Burkholder, 2003; Dentato, Halkitis and Orwat, 2013).

Further to this, there was an ongoing discussion around the subject of shame, which appeared to continue to surface throughout the research. I was alerted to issues surrounding shame through supervision and personal therapy, which I found, upon reflection, really surfaced explicitly through my interviews with Taranjit, Mithun and Varin, but was expressed with more subtlety when interviewing with Pardeep, Sukhjeev and Nirupam. Shame in relation to issues of sex and sexuality could be explored as a lack of discourse mainly due to the repressive functions at play (Mollon, 2002, 2008) when the fissures between human connectedness and understanding cause psychological distress (see Parker, 2012), such as those that can be understood from the experiences of Taranjit, Mithun and Varin.

In thinking about how reflexivity can be described as an attitude that brings forward a thoughtful, considered, and conscientious attentiveness of the researcher in the presence of the research work (Goldspink and Engward, 2019; Finlay, 2002) it has been difficult to ignore the glaring observations around what it means to have a language and a voice that can adequately communicate the phenomenological aspects of what it means to be Male, British South Asian and Bisexual with some nuance. I have been able to understand some of the ways in which the experiences of the participants in earlier life have shaped them through being subject to multiple minority stressors and I would hope that future research allows for the opportunity to begin to ponder the ways in which the myriad threats of the internal world of the home and the external, societal world converge in unique ways, and how people navigate these environments. One of the interesting understandings as a researcher was a

sense of the permeability of these participants because their ability to transition through locations of threat became apparent when exploring and interpreting the data. Thinking psychically about the ability to move through these spaces is something I pondered on when trying to understand the parallel processes of being able to move through or between points of sexuality as someone who is bisexual. Partially, and with some time to reflect on why this occurred, my position as a researcher focussed on exploring aspects of life that were not tied directly to sexual health discourses because a sense of understanding someone through their sexual acts felt reductive when exploring life experiences. On reflection, one of my implicit aims as a researcher came about because I felt a need for British South Asian Males to be further represented as thoughtful individuals who could discuss issues of personal experience with nuance and depth.

5.5.3 Methodological limitations

There were additional limitations distinct from the ones mentioned previously (sections 5.5.1 & 5.5.2) which can be discussed in the following section.

The sample represented in this study was found from a method of contacting various third sector services, charities, online advertisement, Facebook and Twitter campaigns, but came so at the cost of the initial research design. Initial research design at planning stage did look to identify a subgroup of British South Asian bisexual males who were exclusively from a Sikh heritage background, however, after repeated attempts at recruitment phase, it was discussed to broaden the recruitment criteria slightly to British South Asian males of all religious denominations. Despite IPA possibly being conducted with one participant (Smith, 2011) it was deemed more appropriate to recruit as many participants as possible, and in the case of this study, six participants came forward before recruitment was closed. Whilst this

violated some of the homogeneity assumptions required under IPA (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009) it was deemed a close fit based on the other inclusion criteria. There was also the issue of self-selection (Robinson, 2014) in which it is understand that under the research ethics guidance, participants were self-selecting and as such the inclusion criteria could have previously been deemed too restrictive.

This change in inclusion criteria created a need for change with regards to the literature review, in which other South Asian religions were explored in order to understand their views on sexuality.

In two instances of conducting an interview, participants had not read the information that had been provided to them with regards to the remit of the study and the general overview of what was to be discussed and the researcher relied upon his clinical experience and theoretical understandings of attentive listening and empathic attunement (Rogers, 1961) in order to allow participants the space to say what they felt was important during the course of the interview. Participants were offered the opportunity to pause and review the interview schedule and accompanying literature before continuation, however, they both declined and subsequently the interviews continued as best possible.

In the first instance of interview, a participant recounted past historical sexual abuse, which he was given time to explore and talk about in greater depth due to the nature of the meeting. He was offered opportunities to break the interview or terminate as in line with relevant practice in interviews (Gunzenhauzer, 2006) but stated he was receptive to continuing. When this became apparent as the main emphasis of his discussion, he was offered time to continue to discuss his thoughts and feelings, and occasionally the interview schedule was reintroduced to try and steer the conversation back to the research topic.

Following debrief in this instance, the researcher spent an additional hour with the participant to address any issues that could have related to this disclosure of past historical sexual abuse. He was offered additional support and was requested to contact the researcher if there were any problems following the interview. He was requested to interview again but declined to do so at this later juncture. He maintained contact throughout the process of discussing transcription and wished for his transcript to remain included in the analysis.

In the second instance, the participant stated that he wished to continue without looking at the interview schedule but was able to remain within the bounds of the research area.

Another limitation of the study was that surrounding the relative demographics of the participants. This offered a varying set of experiences with regards to how participants addressed issues surrounding their roles and relationships within their families, their life experiences, and was somewhat linked to their relationship status.

Participants who were or had been married spoke of experiences of having children, and their conceptualisations of sexuality in a different manner and context to those who were currently single or dating. Participants who were younger spoke of immersive engagement with LGBT communities and critical engagement with religions (Nirupam, Varin, Sukhjeev and Mithun), whereas those who were older did not seem to speak positively about their engagements with LGBT communities or religions (Taranjit and Pardeep).

Chapter Six: Conclusion

This research study has explored and revealed some experiences that BSAMB have had in relation to elements of their religious and cultural identities, experiences of exploration of sexuality and issues of race regarding historical experiences of racism and present experiences of racial otherness either through exoticisation or rejection through their present dating experiences. This research project does not strive for definitive understanding of being British South Asian and bisexual, but rather looks to explore some of the experiences of people who could arrive for therapeutic work in the future. The research hopes to explore some of the plethora of issues that surround South Asian diasporic experiences regarding bisexuality.

For this group of BSAMB, there have been nuanced discussions around the inability to conceptualise bisexuality at a younger age due to initial deficits in discussing sexuality through the period of adolescence in which they would begin to explore and understand sexual thoughts and feelings, owing to cultural taboos and parental awkwardness surrounding issues of sexuality. Subsequently participants that were unable to participate in these conversations engaged in strategies that interrupted integration of identities and mimicked separation strategies used in their identity formations. There is a possibility that these strategies were mediated by experiences of racial and cultural difference whereby participants indicated that they were othered in wider societal contexts due to race, which amplified feelings of isolation.

Through a nuanced reading of the experiences of how a group of BSAMB have experienced their lives, this exploratory study has sought to bridge some of the information gaps that could be used for the benefit of these clients in future therapeutic work with practitioners.

Participants were able to remedy some issues of identity formation via exploration of self in relation to sexuality and religion through reformation narratives that were discovered. Subsequently, BSAMB participants all expressed issues with linguistic capabilities in order to be able to explain bisexuality adequately to their families and wider cultural groups due to a lack of conceptual understandings from their respective cultures. Participants expressed hope for the future and have looked to engage with LGBT+ communities and reformist religious communities in order to bridge the fissures of their own experiences.

The findings of this study should offer practitioners some insight into the therapeutic needs of BSAMB. Whilst this is an under-developed research area, the information found within this study could aide in therapeutic interventions of this client group, and further research into this client group could offer additional evidence-based theory which informs best practice and therapeutic intervention.

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Appendix A - Organisations [RECRUITMENT] – Initial Letter.

BRITISH ASIAN AND BISEXUAL: A STUDY OF THE MALE PERSPECTIVE

Dear *[Recruitment organisation contact/To whom it may concern]*

I am a Counselling Psychologist doctorate student at the University of Roehampton, undertaking research into the experience of bisexuality in minority ethnic communities.

As part of the research project I would like to interview twelve British Asian men, aged 18 and over (second and third generation) about their experience of being bisexual and/or bi-curious, focussing on their personal experiences of relationships and how their relationships may have been affected by their religious and cultural backgrounds. The proposed research aims to increase the knowledge around the experience of such a group of people for the understanding of counselling psychology and better knowledge of what issues clients come with to counselling.

I wonder if it would be possible for *[organisation]* to contact any service managers/leads they believe would be interested in supporting recruitment of participants in this research.

Participation in research would involve an audio-recorded interview and debrief session lasting up to an hour and a half, which would take place in *[University of Roehampton/named place]*. Interviews would be confidential within the confines of the research project and every effort will be made to ensure the anonymity of the participant in the research and any subsequent publication or presentation. In the case that disclosure of harm to self or others is made, confidentiality would be breached in line with safeguarding protocols.

Should an identified person express interest in this research, they would receive an information sheet explaining more about the research and how to contact the researcher.

Please find *[attached/enclosed]* an information sheet providing more detail about this research.

This project has been approved under the procedures of the University of Roehampton's Ethics Committee. I would be happy to offer more information if required.

Yours Sincerely,

Jaspreet Tehara (Counselling Psychology doctorate student)
University of Roehampton

Tel: 07984131548
Email: teharaj@roehampton.ac.uk Website: www.jaspreettehara.org/research

University of Roehampton London

Appendix B - Organisations [RECRUITMENT] - Information sheet.

BRITISH ASIAN AND BISEXUAL: A STUDY OF THE MALE PERSPECTIVE

INFORMATION SHEET.

Thank you for reading this information sheet. This document will explain why we are doing this research and what would be involved for individuals who choose to take part. We appreciate you taking time to read it, and hope you will be interested in providing support for this research by directly assisting or locating service managers that would be able to assist in recruitment of participants.

The research project

This research aims to explore the experience of British Asian men who identify as bisexual or bi-curious, with a particular focus on:
a) their experience and management of relationships and
b) their conceptualisation of their identities (in terms of their sexuality, ethnicity, culture and religion).

This research will help counselling psychologists to develop a better understanding of minority ethnic diversity and LGBTQ diversity, as well as issues relating to diversity that could present in counselling services.

Research procedure

The research is looking to interview twelve British Asian men, aged 18 and over (second and third generation) who currently identify and bisexual or bi-curious. They will be invited to audio-recorded interviews, which will take place in *[University of Roehampton /named place]*. During the interview, they will be asked about their experiences as men who identify as bisexual/bi-curious, and to reflect on what that means for them in terms of their sexuality, ethnicity, culture and religion. The research methodology is Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), which holds an emphasis on phenomenological and hermeneutic traditions.

Interviews will be audio recorded and transcribed. Following the interview, participants will be debriefed and encouraged to discuss any thoughts or feelings that have arisen from the interview process. The entire interview and debrief should take no longer than an hour and half, but could be shorter.

Services involved

Services who have been identified and are interested in supporting this research will be sent an information sheet outlining the project in greater detail. The relevant contact will be asked to inform and introduce the research to potential participants who meet the inclusion criteria for participation with information sheets. It will then be for the potential participant to decide if they wish to contact the researcher with regards to the project.

Consent

Consent will be obtained from the participant prior to interview. Data collection will not begin until consent has been obtained. The consenting participant will have a right to withdraw consent at any stage of the research up to the point of data synthesis, at which point, their data is explored for general over-arching themes alongside the data of other participants in line with the methodology of an IPA study.

Interview process and debrief

Interviews will be held at *[University of Roehampton /Named place].* The participant will have another opportunity to discuss the research with the researcher before deciding if they wish to participate. They will be asked to fill out a consent form followed by a brief demographic form. Following the interview, the researcher will debrief the participant. Should further support be required following the debriefing session, the participant will be referred back to relevant services in their locality.

Potential disadvantages/risks to participants

There are no expected risks for participants who take part in the study. However, some participants may experience some discomfort answering questions about their personal lives, and may also experience inconvenience in having to give up their time to participate in research. If a participant does experience any discomfort they will be able to miss out questions or withdraw from the study without providing a reason.

Potential benefits to participants

There is no direct benefit to taking part in this study, although some people find it useful to reflect on their personal experiences. The information gathered from this research will contribute to improving our understanding of both sexual and minority ethnic experiences, and the provision of knowledge for counselling psychologists to use in order to benefit people who present with intersecting issues in the future.

Confidentiality

All information provided will be kept confidential and only accessible to members of the research team. All collection, storage and processing of data will comply with principles of the Data Protection Act 1998, and has been approved under the procedures of the University of Roehampton's Ethics Committee. All of the information provided will be stored securely and where possible, made anonymous. Under no circumstances will identifiable information be made available to third parties. All data included in publication or presentation of this research and subsequent research publications will be made anonymous to ensure no participant is identifiable. Limits to confidentiality will apply in situations where participants disclose that they or someone else is at risk of harm in such situations, it is the ethical obligation of the researcher to follow safeguarding procedures enforced by *[University of Roehampton/Service safeguarding]* and where appropriate, to disclose the information the

relevant authorities. In such situations, where possible, this will be discussed with participants before a suitable course of action is taken.

Anonymity and data storage

All data generated from the study will be stored securely to the highest possible standard of confidentiality. Transcribed data will be made anonymous (meaning all identifying information will be removed) to ensure that individuals are not identifiable should the research be published. Anonymous data generated for this study will be stored for an indefinite period of time following the study, and may be used for publication, presentation or subsequent research projects or data analyses. Audio recordings will be destroyed after ten years. Prior to this, they may be used in other research projects or data analyses (at the discretion of the researcher).

Dissemination of findings

The results of this research study will be written up in accordance with the requirements for the Doctorate in Counselling Psychology from the University of Roehampton. The results of this research may be published in academic journals, or presented at conferences.

Who is organising this research.

This research is being undertaken by the Department of Psychology at the University of Roehampton. This project has been approved under the procedures of the University of Roehampton's Ethics Committee.

……..

If you would be interested in supporting this research, or if you have any further questions, please contact Jaspreet Tehara (primary investigator).

Jaspreet Tehara
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Email: teharaj@roehampton.ac.uk

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Please note: If you have any concern about any aspect of your participation or any other queries please raise this with the investigator (or if the researcher is a student, you can contact the Director of Studies). However, if you would like to contact an independent party, please contact the Head of Department.

Director of Studies contact:

Dr. Lyndsey Moon
Department of Psychology

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Appendix C - Service manager/leads [RECRUITMENT] – Introductory letter.

BRITISH ASIAN AND BISEXUAL: A STUDY OF THE MALE PERSPECTIVE

Dear *[Service manager/lead]*

I am a Counselling Psychologist doctorate student at the University of Roehampton, undertaking research into the experience of bisexuality in minority ethnic communities.

As part of the research project I would like to interview twelve British Asian men, aged 18 and over about their experience of being bisexual, focussing on their personal experiences of relationships and how their relationships may have been affected by their religious or cultural backgrounds. I have received your contact details through *[Recruitment organisation/Personal contact]*.

Interviewing participants would involve an audio-recorded interview and debrief session lasting up to an hour and a half. Interviews would be confidential within the confines of the research project and every effort will be made to ensure the anonymity of the participant in the research and any subsequent publication or presentation. In the case that disclosure of harm to self or others is made, confidentiality would be breached in line with safeguarding protocols.

Should an identified person express interest in this research, they would be able to request an information sheet explaining more about the research after making contact with the researcher.

Please find *[attached/enclosed]* an information sheet providing more detail about this research.

This project has been approved under the procedures of the University of Roehampton's Ethics Committee. I would be happy to offer more information if required.

Yours Sincerely,

Jaspreet Tehara (Counselling Psychology doctorate student)
University of Roehampton
Tel: 07984131548
Email: teharaj@roehampton.ac.uk
Website: www.jaspreettehara.org/research

University of Roehampton London

Appendix D - Service manager/lead [RECRUITMENT] – Information sheet

BRITISH ASIAN AND BISEXUAL: A STUDY OF THE MALE PERSPECTIVE

INFORMATION SHEET.

Thank you for reading this information sheet. This document will explain why we are doing this research and what would be involved for individuals who choose to take part. We appreciate you taking time to read it, and hope you will be interested in providing support for this research by aiding in recruitment of participants.

The research project

This research aims to explore the experience of British Asian men who identify as bisexual or bi-curious, with a particular focus on:
a) their experience and management of relationships and
b) their conceptualisation of their identities (in terms of their sexuality, ethnicity, culture and religion).

This research will help counselling psychologists to develop a better understanding of minority ethnic diversity and LGBTQ diversity, as well as issues relating to diversity that could present in counselling services.

Research procedure

The research is looking to interview twelve British Asian men, aged 18 and over (second and third generation) who currently identify and bisexual or bi-curious. They will be invited to audio-recorded interviews, which will take place in *[University of Roehampton /named place]*. During the interview, they will be asked about their experiences as men who identify as bisexual/bi-curious, and to reflect on what that means for them in terms of their sexuality, ethnicity, culture and religion. The research methodology is Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), which holds an emphasis on phenomenological and hermeneutic traditions.

Interviews will be audio recorded and transcribed. Following the interview, participants will be debriefed and encouraged to discuss any thoughts or feelings that have arisen from the interview process. The entire interview and debrief should take no longer than an hour and half, but could be shorter.

Services involvement

Services who are able to identify potential participants and who are interested in supporting this research are requested to inform potential participants of the study about how to contact the researcher. Potential participants who meet the inclusion criteria for participation will be provided detailed information sheets.

The inclusion criteria are as follows:

- Male, British and Asian, second or third generation (18 years old and over) who currently self-identify as bisexual/bi-curious.
- Comfortable with audio recording and being interviewed.

It will then be for the potential participant to decide if they wish to continue with involvement in the research project.

Consent

Consent will be obtained from the participant prior to interview. Data collection will not begin until consent has been obtained. The consenting participant will have a right to withdraw consent at any stage of the research up to the point of data synthesis, at which point, their data is explored for general over-arching themes alongside the data of other participants in line with the methodology of an interpretative phenomenological snalysis study.

Interview process and debrief

Interviews will be held at *[University of Roehampton/Named place]*. The participant will have another opportunity to discuss the research with the researcher before deciding if they wish to participate. They will be asked to fill out a consent form followed by a brief demographic form. Following the interview, the researcher will debrief the participant. Should further support be required following the debriefing session, the participant will be referred back to relevant services in their locality.

Potential disadvantages/risks to participants

There are no expected risks for participants who take part in the study. However, some participants may experience some discomfort answering questions about their personal lives, and may also experience inconvenience in having to give up their time to participate in research. If a participant does experience any discomfort they will be able to miss out questions or withdraw from the study without providing a reason.

Potential benefits to participants

There is no direct benefit to taking part in this study, although some people find it useful to reflect on their personal experiences. The information gathered from this research will contribute to improving our understanding of both sexual and minority ethnic experiences, and the provision of knowledge for counselling psychologists to use in order to benefit people who present with intersecting issues in the future.

Confidentiality

All information provided will be kept confidential and only accessible to members of the research team. All collection, storage and processing of data will comply with principles of the Data Protection Act 1998, and has been approved under the procedures of the University of Roehampton's Ethics Committee. All of the information provided will be stored securely and where possible, made anonymous. Under no circumstances will identifiable information be made available to third parties. All data included in publication or presentation of this research and subsequent research publications will be made anonymous to ensure no participant is identifiable. Limits to confidentiality will apply in situations where participants disclose that they or someone else is at risk of harm. In such situations, it is the ethical obligation of the researcher to follow safeguarding procedures enforced by *[University of Roehampton/Service safeguarding]* and where appropriate, to disclose the information the relevant authorities. In such situations, where possible, this will be discussed with participants before a suitable course of action is taken.

Anonymity and data storage

All data generated from the study will be stored securely to the highest possible standard of confidentiality. Transcribed data will be made anonymous (meaning all identifying information will be removed) to ensure that individuals are not identifiable should the research be published. Anonymous data generated for this study will be stored for an indefinite period of time following the study, and may be used for publication, presentation or subsequent research projects or data analyses. Audio recordings will be destroyed after ten years. Prior to this, they may be used in other research projects or data analyses (at the discretion of the researcher).

Dissemination of findings

The results of this research study will be written up in accordance with the requirements for the Doctorate in Counselling Psychology from the University of Roehampton. The results of this research may be published in academic journals, or presented at conferences.

Who is organising this research.

This research is being undertaken by the Department of Psychology at the University of Roehampton. This project has been approved under the procedures of the University of Roehampton's Ethics Committee.

…….....

If you would be interested in supporting this research, or if you have any further questions, please contact Jaspreet Tehara (primary investigator).

Jaspreet Tehara
Department of Psychology
University of Roehampton
Whitelands College
Holybourne Avenue
London
SW15 4JD

Phone: 07984131548
Email: teharaj@roehampton.ac.uk

Website: www.jaspreettehara.org/research

Please note: If you have any concern about any aspect of your participation or any other queries please raise this with the investigator (or if the researcher is a student, you can contact the Director of Studies). However, if you would like to contact an independent party, please contact the Head of Department.

Director of Studies contact:

Dr. Lyndsey Moon
Department of Psychology
Whitelands College
Holybourne Avenue
London
SW15 4JD

Email: Lyndsey.moon@roehampton.ac.uk
Tel: 020 8392 5773

Head of Department contact:

Dr. Diane Bray
Department of Psychology
Whitelands College
Holybourne Avenue
London
SW15 4JD

Email: d.bray@roehampton.ac.uk
Tel: 020 8392 3627

Appendix E - Website [RECRUITMENT] Participant flyer.

BRITISH ASIAN AND BISEXUAL: A STUDY OF THE MALE PERSPECTIVE

Hello, and thank you for taking the time to access this website.

I am a Counselling Psychologist doctorate student at the University of Roehampton, carrying out research into the experiences of British Asian men who self-identify as bi-curious or bisexual.

At present, I am looking for participants who are second or third generation British Asian and 18 years old or over.

If you feel as though you would like to be involved in this project, please use the contact form in the navigation panel to register your interest and you will be contacted shortly.

Interviews will last between sixty and ninety minutes (but could be shorter) and will take place at University of Roehampton. Alternatively, arrangements can be discussed if you cannot make it to Roehampton.

Interviews will be audio recorded, will be confidential, and your identity will be protected.

Yours Sincerely,
Jaspreet Tehara (Counselling Psychologist doctorate student)
University of Roehampton

Appendix F - Website [RECURITMENT] – Completed contact form page.

Thank you for taking the time to register your interest in participating in this research.
I will be in contact with you shortly with an information summary regarding the research topic.

The proposed research study aims to increase the knowledge around the experience of British Asian men who identify as bi-curious or bisexual for the understanding of counselling psychology and to increase the knowledge of what issues clients could possibly come with to counselling.

I would like to interview second and third generation (18 years old or over) about their experience of being bisexual and/or bi-curious, focussing on their personal experiences of relationships and how their relationships may have been affected by their religious and cultural backgrounds.

Your participation in research would involve an audio-recorded interview and debrief session lasting up to an hour and a half, which would take place at University of Roehampton. Alternatively, if you are unable to attend Roehampton in order to participate, then alternative arrangements can be discussed.

Interviews will be confidential within the confines of the research project and every effort will be made to ensure your anonymity in the research and any subsequent publication or presentation. However, in the case that disclosure of harm to self or others is made, confidentiality would be breached in line with safeguarding protocols.

This project has been approved under the procedures of the University of Roehampton's Ethics Committee. I would be happy to offer more information if required.

Yours Sincerely,
Jaspreet Tehara (Counselling Psychology doctorate student)
University of Roehampton

University of Roehampton London

Appendix G - Twitter [RECRUITMENT] – (Tweets at 140 characters, web link in tweets.) (*RT – retweet)

Tweet 1.

I'm researching the experience of Bi and Bi-curious British Asian men in the UK. Interested in taking part? Website: www.jaspreettehara.org/research

Tweet 2.

Are you Bi, British Asian and male? In the UK? Over 18? Would you like to take part in an interview?
Website: www.jaspreettehara.org/research

Tweet 3.

If you're Bi or Bi-curious, British Asian and male and would like to be interviewed on your experience (18 and over) Website: www.jaspreettehara.org/research

Tweet 4.

I'm researching bisexuality and male experiences in British Asians in the UK. If you're 18 and over and you'd like to take part Website: www.jaspreettehara.org/research

Direct message 1.

Dear *[insert name/twitter handle]*
I am conducting research into bisexuality in BAME communities. More specifically, I am looking to interview British Asian men on their experiences of bisexuality/bi-curiosity. Would you be able to help in my recruitment of participants by *RT-ing one of my tweets to your followers?
Kind regards,

Jaspreet Tehara.

Appendix H - Facebook/Social Media [RECRUITMENT] – Facebook page (with re-direct to main website).

BRITISH ASIAN AND BISEXUAL: A STUDY OF THE MALE PERSPECTIVE

I am a Counselling Psychologist doctorate student at the University of Roehampton, carrying out research into the experiences of British Asian men who self-identify as bi-curious or bisexual.

At present, I am looking for participants who are second or third generation British Asian and 18 years old or over.

If you feel as though you would like to be involved in this project, please use the contact form in the navigation panel to register your interest and you will be contacted shortly. Please ***do not*** leave your details on this page, as this could jeopardise your anonymity, but use the secure link or email address provided below.

Interviews will last between sixty and ninety minutes (but could be shorter) and will take place at University of Roehampton. Alternatively, arrangements can be discussed if you cannot make it to Roehampton.

Interviews will be audio–recorded, will be confidential, and your identity will be protected. Please do not reply on this page if you wish for your confidentiality to remain in tact.

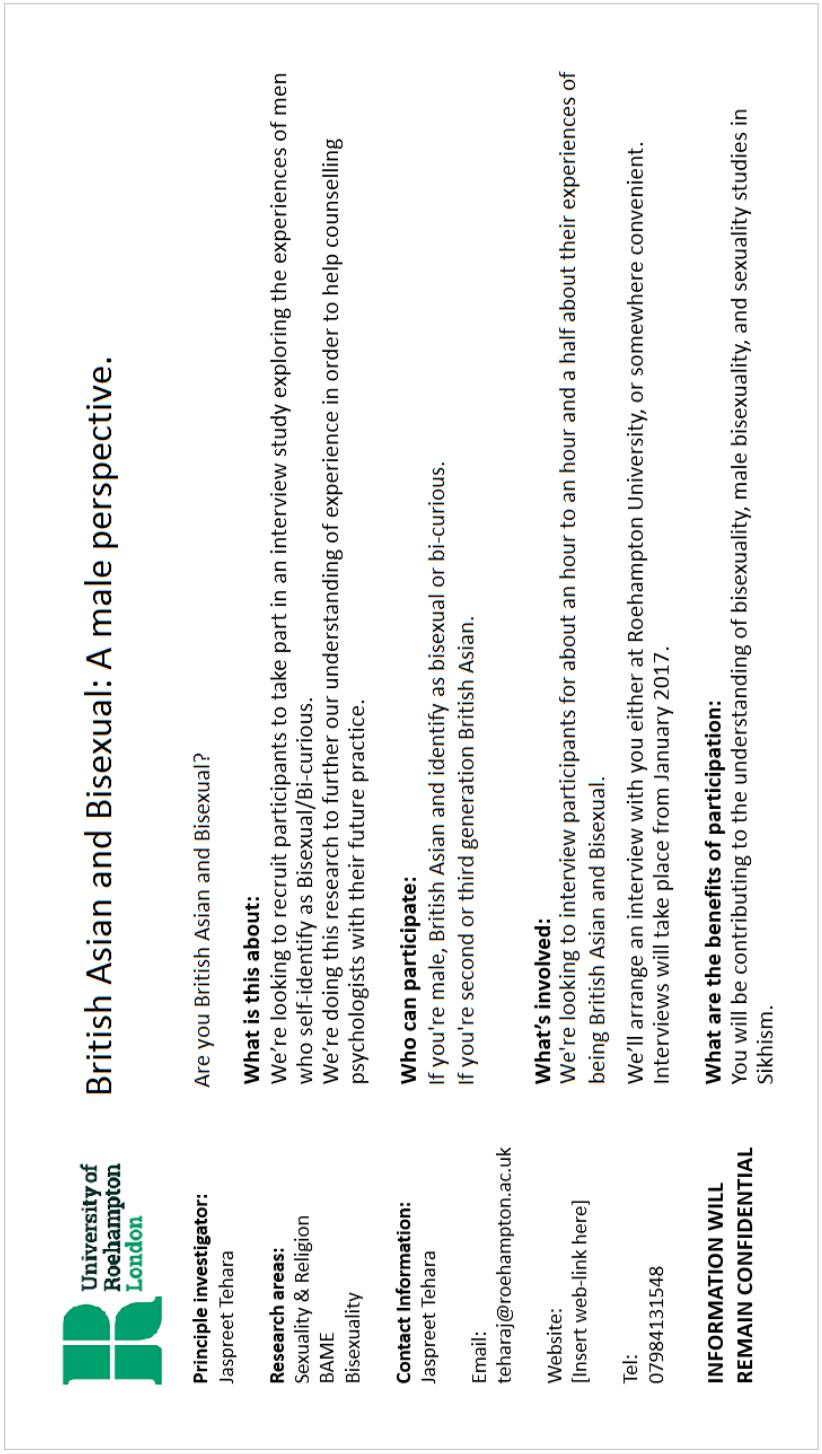
If you are interested, please register your interest here:
Website: www.jaspreettehara.org/research

or contact me directly:
teharaj@roehampton.ac.uk

Yours Sincerely,
Jaspreet Tehara (Counselling Psychologist doctorate student)
University of Roehampton

University of Roehampton London

Appendix I - Advertisement [RECRUITMENT] – Advert for publication/Twitter Image



University of Roehampton London

Appendix J - Advertisement [RECRUITMENT] – Poster

BRITISH ASIAN AND BISEXUAL: A STUDY OF THE MALE PERSPECTIVE

Are you British Asian and male, currently identifying as bisexual or bi-curious?

The proposed research study aims to increase the knowledge around the experience of British Asian men who identify as bi-curious or bisexual for the understanding of counselling psychology and to increase the knowledge of what issues clients could possibly come with to counselling.

I would like to interview second and third generation (18 years old or over) about their experience of being bisexual and/or bi-curious, focussing on their personal experiences of relationships and how their relationships may have been affected by their religious and cultural backgrounds.

Your participation in research would involve an audio-recorded interview and debrief session lasting up to an hour and a half, which would take place at University of Roehampton. Alternatively, if you are unable to attend Roehampton in order to participate, then alternative arrangements can be discussed.

Interviews will be confidential within the confines of the research project and every effort will be made to ensure your anonymity in the research and any subsequent publication or presentation.

This project has been approved under the procedures of the University of Roehampton's Ethics Committee. I would be happy to offer more information if required.

Your participation will be highly appreciated and will have a great value to the field of counselling psychology, and the research areas of male sexuality and cultural and religious studies.
If you are interested in participating, please contact Jaspreet Tehara:
teharaj@roehampton.ac.uk

University of Roehampton London

Appendix K - Participant information sheet.

BRITISH ASIAN AND BISEXUAL: A STUDY OF THE MALE PERSPECTIVE

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Thank you for expressing interest in and participating in this study.

We would like to invite you to take part in our research project. We are looking to interview between eight and ten British Asian men who self-identify as bi-curious or bisexual. We are interested in the experiences British Asian men have of their sexuality, religion, culture and management of personal relationships. We believe that it is important to explore the various intersections of these experiences as they have not been explored in detail previously.

Before you decide if you wish to participate, it is important to outline the reasons as to why we are researching this topic.

Why are we doing this research?

Research regarding male bisexuality is relatively sparse when compared to the work surrounding female bisexuality. It is understood that men who are bisexual face discrimination from both heterosexual and homosexual communities and suffer from increased chances of mental health issues, drug use and sexual minority stress.

Similarly, there is little by way of research on sex, sexuality and sexual practices for British Asians of all genders. With regard to LGBTQ communities and British Asians, previous research has focussed on men who are ‘gay and bisexual,’ which has lead to an erasure of experience. This study seeks to understand more of the nuance of what it means to be British Asian and Bisexual in the United Kingdom.

Why have I been asked to participate?

You have been asked to take part in this study because:

- You are 18 or over, male, and are second or third generation British Asian
- You self-identify as bi-curious or bisexual

Consent

Consent will be obtained from you prior to interview. Data collection will not begin until consent has been obtained. You have a right to withdraw consent at any stage of the research

up to the point of data synthesis, at which point, your data is explored for general over-arching themes alongside the data of other participants in line with the methodology of an IPA study.

Procedure of the study

If you decide to take part in the interview, you will be invited to meet with Jaspreet at University of Roehampton or an alternative suitable venue. You will have another opportunity to discuss the research topic with Jaspreet before deciding if you wish to participate. You will be asked to fill out a consent form followed by a brief demographic form. We will then begin the interview, which will be audio recorded. Following the interview, Jaspreet will complete a debriefing session with you. Later on, the audio from the interview will be transcribed and treated to anonymity procedures, which removes identifying information. If you would like an opportunity to read the transcript after the interview, Jaspreet can arrange for this, and would appreciate any feedback you would like to give.

Anonymity and data storage

All data generated from the study will be stored securely to the highest possible standard of confidentiality. Transcribed data will be made anonymous (meaning all identifying information will be removed) to ensure that you are not identifiable should the research be published. Anonymous data generated for this study will be stored for an indefinite period of time following the study, and may be used for publication, presentation or subsequent research projects or data analyses. Audio recordings will be destroyed after ten years. Prior to this, they may be used in other research projects or data analyses (at the discretion of the researcher).

Confidentiality

All information provided will be kept confidential and only accessible to members of the research team. All collection, storage and processing of data will comply with principles of the Data Protection Act 1998, and has been approved under the procedures of the University of Roehampton's Ethics Committee. All of the information provided will be stored securely and where possible, made anonymous. Under no circumstances will identifiable information be made available to third parties. All data included in publication or presentation of this research and subsequent research publications will be made anonymous to ensure you are not identifiable. Limits to confidentiality will apply in situations where you disclose that you or someone else is at risk of harm. In such situations, it is the ethical obligation of the researcher to follow safeguarding procedures from *[University of Roehampton/Service safeguarding]* and where appropriate, to disclose the information to the relevant authorities. In such situations, where possible, this will be discussed with you before a suitable course of action is taken.

Dissemination of findings

The results of this research study will be written up in accordance with the requirements for the Doctorate in Counselling Psychology from the University of Roehampton. The results of

this research may be published in academic journals, or presented at conferences.

Who is organising this research.
This research is being undertaken by the Department of Psychology at the University of Roehampton. This project has been approved under the procedures of the University of Roehampton's Ethics Committee.

……..

If you would be interested in supporting this research, or if you have any further questions, please contact Jaspreet Tehara (primary investigator).

Jaspreet Tehara
Department of Psychology
University of Roehampton
Whitelands College
Holybourne Avenue
London
SW15 4JD

Phone: 07984131548
Email: teharaj@roehampton.ac.uk

Website: www.jaspreettehara.org/research

Please note: If you have any concern about any aspect of your participation or any other queries please raise this with the investigator (or if the researcher is a student, you can contact the Director of Studies). However, if you would like to contact an independent party, please contact the Head of Department.

Director of Studies contact:

Dr. Lyndsey Moon
Department of Psychology
Whitelands College
Holybourne Avenue
London
SW15 4JD

Email: Lyndsey.moon@roehampton.ac.uk
Tel: 020 8392 5773

Head of Department contact:

Dr. Diane Bray
Department of Psychology
Whitelands College
Holybourne Avenue
London
SW15 4JD

Email: d.bray@roehampton.ac.uk
Tel: 020 8392 3627

University of Roehampton London

Appendix L - Participant consent form.

BRITISH ASIAN AND BISEXUAL: A STUDY OF THE MALE PERSPECTIVE CONSENT FORM

Consent statements (please tick if you agree)

1	I have read and understood the information sheet about the study.	☐
2	I have had the chance to ask questions about the study and I know what I am being asked to do. I know who I can contact if I need to.	☐
3	I understand that I am a volunteer for this project and agree to take part.	☐
4	I understand I can leave the project at any time without giving reasons. I understand that when the data is in a collated form, it will not be possible to remove the data from the study.	☐
5	Confidentiality has been explained to be. I understand that if I state anything to suggest that either myself or someone else is at risk of harm, confidentiality could be broken.	☐
6	I agree that my interview can be audio recorded and transcribed.	☐
7	The use of data in research, publications, presentations, sharing and storage has been explained to me. This data will be collected and processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, and the University of Roehampton's data protection policy.	☐
8	I understand that my identity will be protected in any write-ups or articles of this study.	☐
9	I understand that my voice recordings will be destroyed after ten years. I understand that in this time (and with the permission of the researcher), other researchers may be able to use the data if they wish to treat it confidentially.	☐
10	I agree to sign and date this consent form.	☐
11	Post write-up of the transcript, I would like to read and review it, and offer feedback.	☐

University of Roehampton London

Name……...

Signature…….....

Date…….....

Investigator contact details:
Jaspreet Tehara
Department of Psychology
University of Roehampton
Whitelands College
London
SW15 4JD

Tel: 07984131548
Email:teharaj@roehampton.ac.uk

Please note: If you have any concern about any aspect of your participation or any other queries please raise this with the investigator (or if the researcher is a student, you can contact the Director of Studies). However, if you would like to contact an independent party, please contact the Head of Department.

Director of Studies contact:

Dr. Lyndsey Moon
Department of Psychology
Whitelands College
Holybourne Avenue
London
SW15 4JD

Email: Lyndsey.moon@roehampton.ac.uk
Tel: 020 8392 5773

Head of Department contact:

Dr. Diane Bray
Department of Psychology
Whitelands College
Holybourne Avenue
London
SW15 4JD

Email: d.bray@roehampton.ac.uk
Tel: 020 8392 3627

University of Roehampton London

Appendix M - Participant demographic form.

BRITISH ASIAN AND BISEXUAL: A STUDY OF THE MALE PERSPECTIVE

DEMOGRAPHIC FORM

Identification code:

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this research. Please fill in the following information.

1) I identify as:

☐Bi-curious ☐Bisexual

2) I am:

☐ Second generation ☐Third generation

3) I am:

☐18-24 ☐25-32 ☐33-41 ☐42-48

☐49+

4) I am currently:

☐ Single

☐ In a heterosexual relationship ☐ In a homosexual relationship

☐ In a non-gender specific relationship

☐ Married in a heterosexual / homosexual / non-gender specific relationship

☐ Monogamous ☐Polyamorous

University of Roehampton London

Appendix N - Participant Debrief form.

BRITISH ASIAN AND BISEXUAL: A STUDY OF THE MALE PERSPECTIVE

DEBRIEF

Thank you for participating in the study today.

The purpose of this research

We have been conducting this research due to multiple points of interest in the experience of men who identify as bisexual and bi-curious. Our aim in interviewing you today was to find out your experience of being male and bisexual or bi-curious with a particular focus on:
a) your experience and management of relationships and
b) your conceptualisation of their identities (in terms of their sexuality, ethnicity, culture and religion).

This research will help counselling psychologists to develop a better understanding of minority ethnic diversity and LGBTQ diversity, as well as issues relating to diversity that could present in counselling services.

The interest in this research comes from the scarcity of research based on understanding sexuality via the various intersections of ethnic minorities and cultural/religious contexts. Secondly, there is relatively little understanding of the experience of men who self-identify as bisexual or bi-curious.

Post-interview debrief

Sometimes during an interview, people get thoughts, feelings, concerns or questions that they wish to discuss further.

It is important that you have a chance to reflect on the interview and to take some time to consider if there is anything else you wish to discuss. The following questions may help you:

- How do you feel having completed the interview?

- How did it feel to be interviewed?

- Has the interview brought up any thoughts or feelings you may not have been aware of?

- Do you have any concerns or questions about what happens next?

- Do you think there are any questions I should have asked that I didn't?

- Do you have any ideas about how I could improve the interview?

- Is there anything else you would like to share at this point?

Finally, thank you for your contribution to this research. I hope you have enjoyed taking part.

If you think of any questions you would like to ask once the I have gone, or if you need further support, then you can ask to speak to [insert staff member name here] or you can contact me:

Please note: If you have any concern about any aspect of your participation or any other queries please raise this with the investigator (or if the researcher is a student, you can contact the Director of Studies). However, if you would like to contact an independent party, please contact the Head of Department.

Director of Studies contact:

Dr. Lyndsey Moon
Department of Psychology
Whitelands College
Holybourne Avenue
London
SW15 4JD

Email: Lyndsey.moon@roehampton.ac.uk
Tel: 020 8392 5773

Head of Department contact:

Dr. Diane Bray
Department of Psychology
Whitelands College
Holybourne Avenue
London
SW15 4JD

Email: d.bray@roehampton.ac.uk
Tel: 020 8392 3627

University of Roehampton London

Appendix O - CREST DATA STORAGE AND PROTECTION PROCEDURES

CENTRE FOR RESEARCH IN SOCIAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL TRANSFORMATION (CREST)

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

DATA STORAGE AND PROTECTION PROCEDURES

Sources

These procedures are informed by, and consistent with, the following sources:

- *University of Roehampton Data Protection Policy*, University of Roehampton, May 2010 (revised).
- *Ethical Guidelines for Researching Counselling and Psychotherapy*, British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy, 2004.
- *Encrypting Confidential Data using Windows XP*, Counselling and Psychotherapy Research Guidelines, Counselling Unit, University of Strathclyde (available via Google Group).
- *Ethical Principles for Conducting Research with Human Participants*, British Psychological Society (accessed Sept. 2008).
- Personal communications with Ralph Weedon, Data Protection Officer, University of Strathclyde

Responsibilities

- The Chief Investigator has overall responsibility to ensure that the appropriate data storage and protection guidelines are followed.

Non-anonymised/personal data

- Non-anonymised (or ‘personal’) data refers to any form of documentation or media – electronic or otherwise – in which an individual is identifiable. This includes, but is not limited to:
    - signed consent forms
    - client identity forms (including DOB, GP details, gender etc)
    - video recordings

  Note: even if no name or other obvious data is involved that would identify an individual, data such as date of birth, student matriculation number, national insurance number can be ‘triangulated’, perhaps with other data a third party has acquired, in such as way as to effectively identify someone. Anything that can be used in this way is therefore to be considered personal data.
- Collection of non-anonymised data will be kept to a minimum, and will only be obtained where it is ethically necessary (as in the case of signed consent forms), or where it clearly adds to the scientific value of a project (for instance, the video recording of counselling sessions).
- Non-anonymised data will be kept for ten years.
- All non-anonymised data will be clearly labelled with a date at which it should be destroyed.
- Non-anonymised data will be destroyed in a way which ensures that the data cannot be recovered in any way.
- Non-anonymised data will be kept physically and/or electronically separate from related anonymised data so that links can not be made between the two sets of data.
- Non-electronic personal data, such as tape recordings and signed consent forms, should be kept in a locked and secure location at all times, and, wherever possible, at the University of Roehampton.
- Electronic personal data will be encrypted and should always be kept on a password protected storage device: wherever possible a PC or network drive located at the University of Roehampton.

- Personal data should not be kept on – or transferred to – laptops, USB sticks, CDs or other mobile/portable devices unless absolutely necessary. As soon as such data is transferred to a secure University location, it must be removed from the portable device such that it cannot be recovered in any way.
- *Should it be necessary to transfer personal data from person to person, this should be done in a secure manner (i.e., by hand or by recorded delivery), always separate from any anonymised data. Any posted materials should be marked 'private and confidential' and sent recorded delivery.*
- For the duration of a study, non-anonymised data may, if absolutely necessary, be stored (in the manner identified above) by investigators other than the Chief Investigator (for instance, where a student is analysing video tapes of counselling sessions). However, on completion of the write-up of the research, all non-anonymised data will be returned to the Chief Investigator for storage, and any copies destroyed.

Anonymised data

- Anonymised data refers to any form of documentation or media – electronic or otherwise – in which an individual is in no way identifiable. This includes, but is not limited to:
    - SPSS spreadsheets in which identifying characteristics (such as age) are not recorded
    - completed questionnaires: qualitative or quantitative
- Anonymised data may be kept for an unlimited period, and may be used for subsequent research projects and data analyses at the discretion of the Chief Investigator (provided that this is made explicit to participants in consent forms).
- Non-electronic anonymised data will be kept in a locked and secure location at all times, ideally at the University of Roehampton.
- Electronic anonymised data may be stored electronically. This should always be to the highest possible standard of confidentiality: for instance, storage in an encrypted folder. It may also be kept on a password protected storage device, ideally at the

University of Roehampton and, wherever possible, will be encrypted. Transfer and storage on portable/mobile devices (such as USB pens) should be kept to a minimum.

- Transfer of anonymised data should be conducted to the highest standards of confidentiality, always separate from any non-anonymised data. Any posted materials should be marked 'private and confidential.' If anonymised data is transferred via email, it should be transferred by the receiver to an encrypted portion of a hard disk as soon as possible, and both sender and receiver should hard delete the email/attachments from their email server.
- For the duration of a study, anonymised data may be stored (in the manner identified above) by investigators other than the Chief Investigator. However, on completion of the write-up of the research, all anonymised data will be returned to the Chief Investigator for storage, and any copies destroyed.

Partially anonymised data (also known as Pseudo-anonymised data)

- This section refers to any form of documentation or media – electronic or otherwise – in which it is highly unlikely that research participants can be identified, but in which the possibility of triangulation exists. This may include, but is not limited to:
    - audio recordings

  Note, if such media includes clearly identifying content (for instance, an interviewee reveals their name or that of their husband on an audio recording), then it will be treated as non-anonymised data until those identifying characteristics are removed.
- Wherever possible, partially anonymised (and non-anonymised) data should be scrutinised and all identifying details should be deleted/erased (for instance, identifying features on transcripts, such as names of partners, should be deleted or blacked out).
- Where all identifying details of partially anonymised data have been deleted/erased, this data will be treated as anonymised data, and subjected to the same procedures as above.

- In instances where partially anonymised data can not be fully anonymised (for instance, audio recordings in which the participant may be identifiable from their voice), this data will be kept for ten years, and will be stored according to the protocols for non-anonymised data.
- Within this ten year period, partially anonymised data may be used for subsequent research projects and data analyses at the discretion of the Chief Investigator (provided that this is made explicit to participants in consent forms).

The eight general principles of the data protection act, 1998

- Personal data shall be processed fairly and lawfully (with specific requirements regarding sensitive personal data).
- Personal data shall be obtained only for one or more specified and lawful purposes, and shall not be further processed in any manner incompatible with that purpose or those purposes.
- Personal data shall be adequate, relevant and not excessive in relation to the purpose or purposes for which they are processed.
- Personal data shall be accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date.
- Personal data processed for any purpose or purposes shall not be kept for longer than is necessary for that purpose or those purposes.
- Personal data shall be processed in accordance with the rights of data subjects.
- Appropriate technical and organisational measures shall be taken against unauthorised or unlawful processing of personal data and against loss or destruction of, or damage to, personal data.
- Personal data shall not be transferred to a country or territory outside the European Economic Area, unless that country or territory ensures an adequate level of protection for the rights and freedoms of data subjects in relation to the processing of personal data.

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Appendix P – Interview Schedule.

Religious identity

1a.) What was it like growing up as a *[insert religious background]* for you?

1b.) What are your thoughts on your religion and what it means to be from your religion?

Construction of bisexual identity

2a.) Can you tell me what it was like to realise that you were bisexual or bi-curious?

2b.) How has your life been since you discovered your sexuality?

The relationship between religious identity & sexuality

3a.) What do you feel about your religion and sexuality?

3b.) What are your thoughts on your religion and bisexuality?

3c.) Has being from your religious background affected your romantic relationships?

Disclosure of bisexuality to family, friends or partners

4a.) What has been your experience of your partners towards your sexuality?

4b.) Have you experienced or thought about telling anyone in your family about being Bisexual/Bi-curious?

4c.) What do you think your friends think about your sexuality?

4d.) How do you think they have felt about you?

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Appendix Q - Transcription Conventions

As cited in Hutchby and Woffitt (2008). The data utilised the following conventions:

Notation key for transcript	
Symbol	Explaination
( )	Unclear talk
(*x*)	Time pause in speech
[ ]	Explanatory material added by researcher
…	Significant Pause
-	Utterance or Stutter (Unfinished word)
[REDACTED]	Material omitted due to confidentiality
(Inaudible)	Difficult to understand

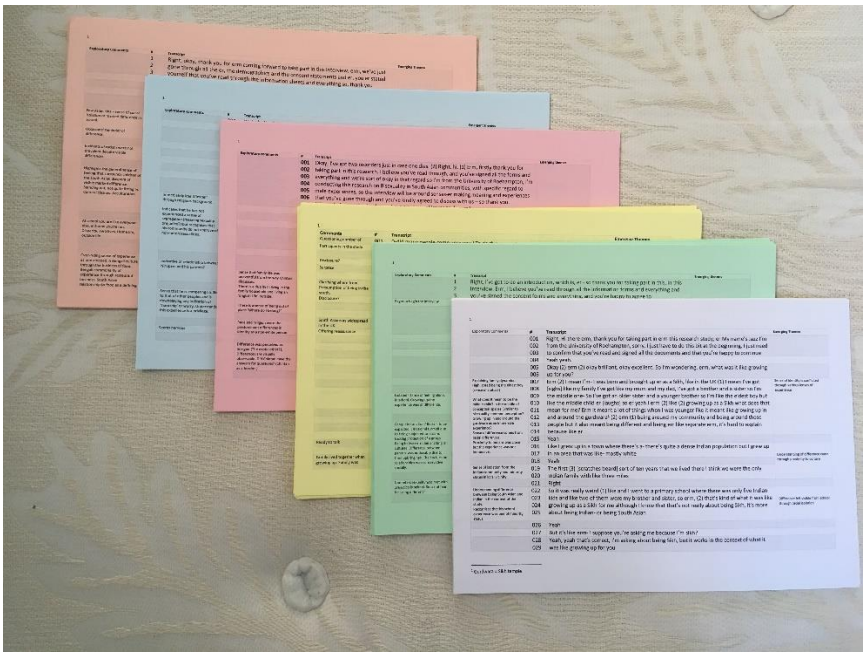
Appendix R - Theme Exploration – Transcripts printed on colour coded paper

Transcripts which had been offered several line-by-line readings and extensive notations were written out and printed on colour coded paper.

Mithun (Peach), Nirupam (Blue), Pardeep (Pink), Taranjit (Yellow), Varin (Green) & Sukhjeev (White).

Transcripts were arranged as:

Exploratory comments, line number, transcript, emerging themes.



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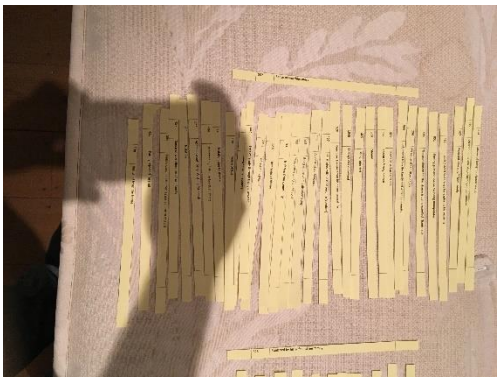
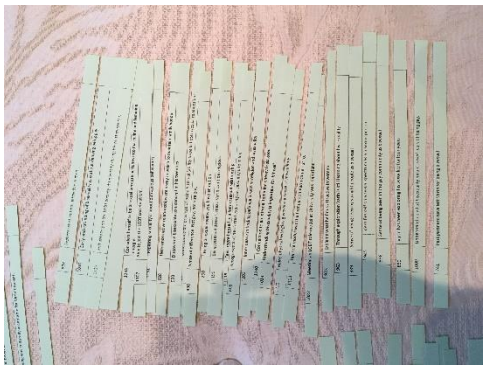
Appendix S - Theme Exploration – Ideographic exploration of emerging themes

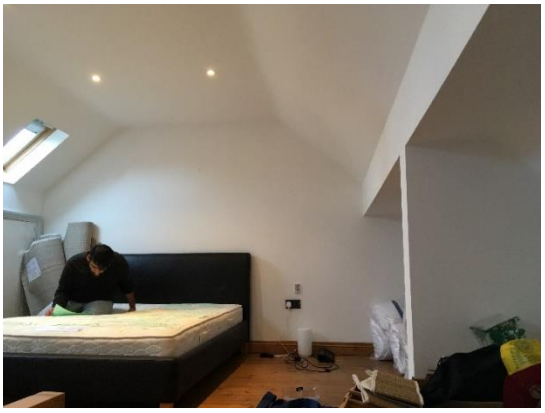
Once exploratory themes were confirmed, they were written into a spreadsheet, reprinted with corresponding colour paper, cut with a guillotine, and rearranged into clusters.

Examples of clustering line by line themes ideographically





Line by line re-reading with clusters to confirm themes were as close as possible.



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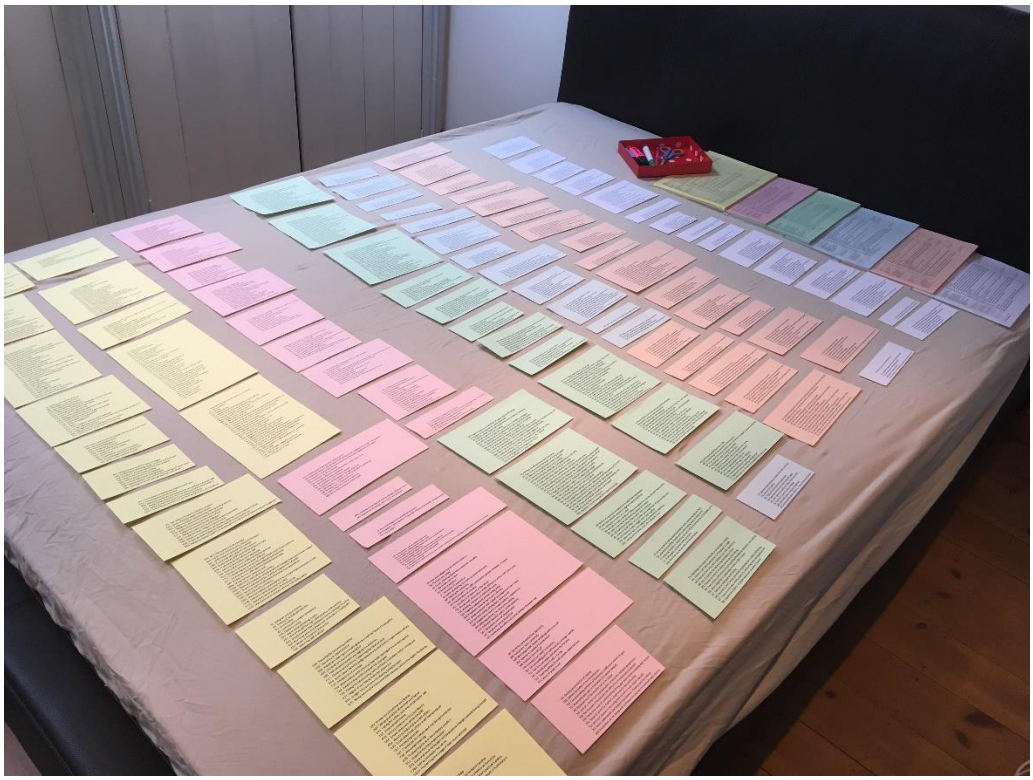
Appendix T - Theme Exploration – Emerging themes grouped ideographically.

Once emerging themes were confirmed, they were re-written and re-printed on corresponding coloured paper and arranged ideographically.



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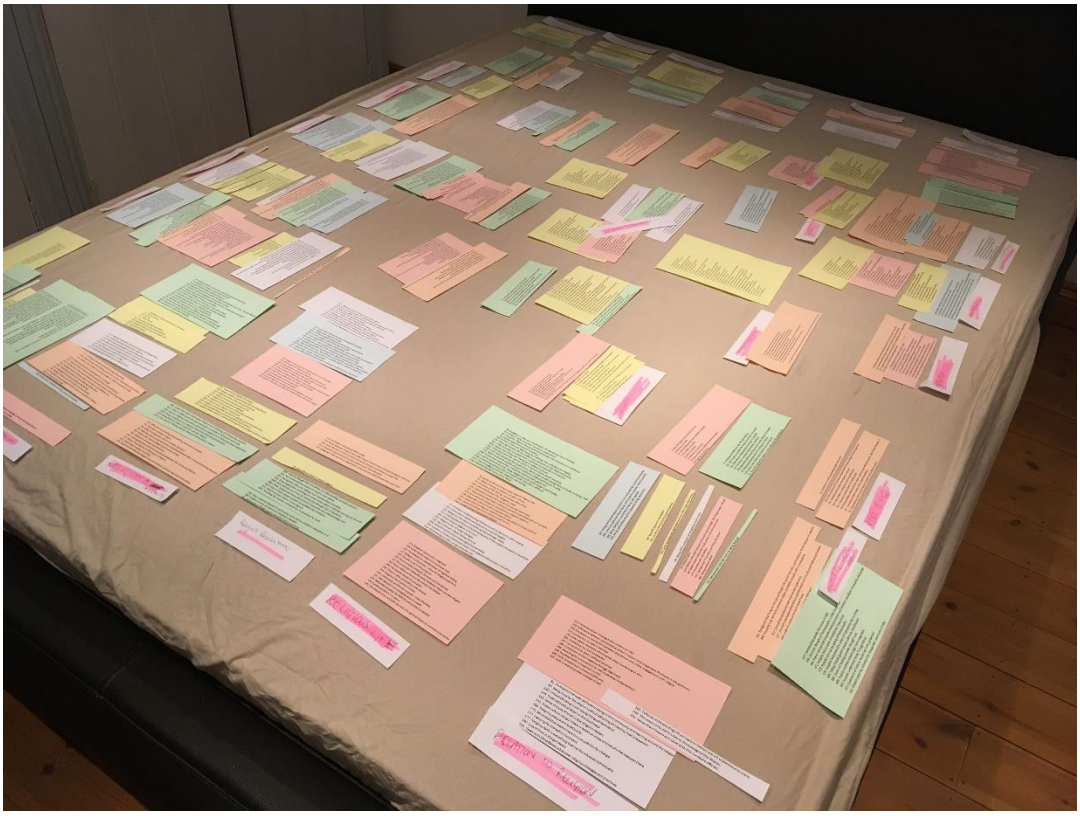
Appendix U - Theme Exploration – Creation of master themes

At this point, master themes were explored, and re-arrangement of emerging themes led to the creation of master themes.



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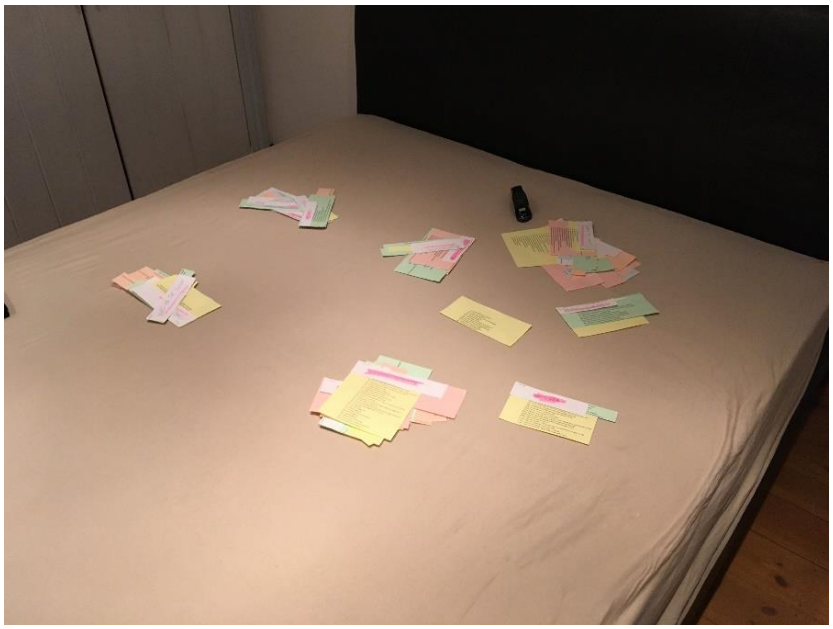
Appendix V - Theme Exploration – Creation of Superordinate themes.

Following the collation of master themes, they were placed into superordinate categories.



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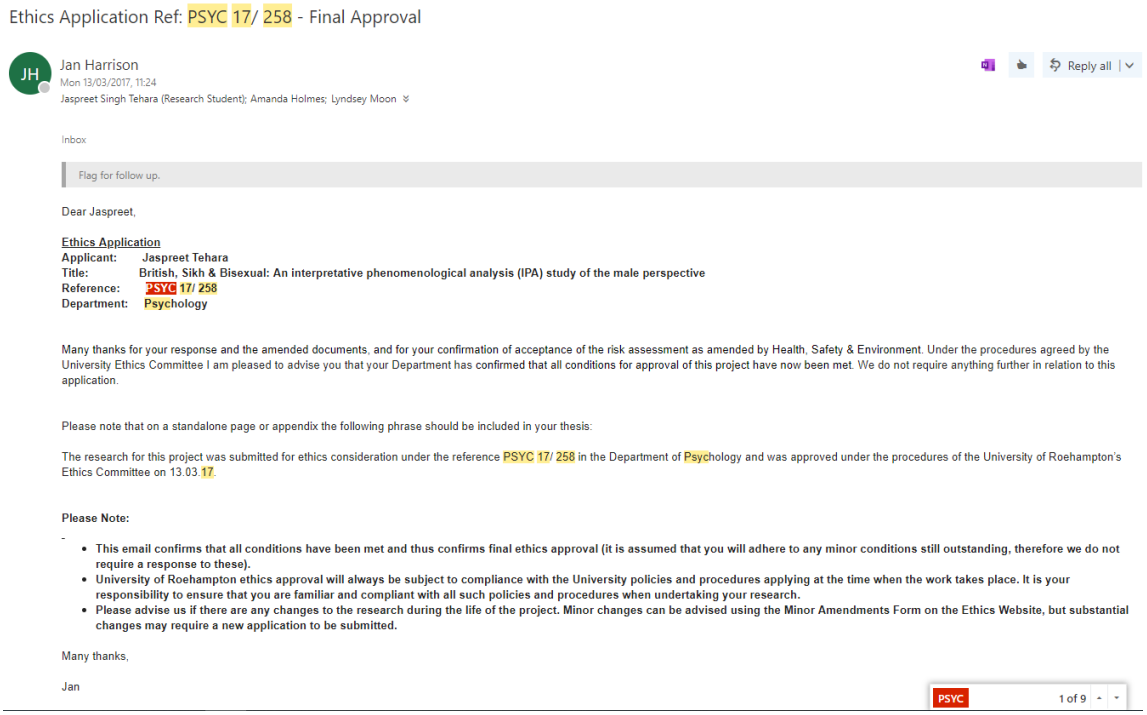
Appendix W – Ethical Approval

The research for this project was submitted for ethics consideration under the reference PSYC 17/258 in the department of Psychology and was approved under the procedures of the University of Roehampton's Ethics committee on 13.03.2017.



Ethics Application Ref: PSYC 17/ 258 - Final Approval

Jan Harrison
Mon 13/03/2017, 11:24
Jaspreet Singh Tehara (Research Student); Amanda Holmes; Lyndsey Moon

Reply all

Inbox

Flag for follow up.

Dear Jaspreet,

Ethics Application
Applicant: Jaspreet Tehara
Title: British, Sikh & Bisexual: An interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) study of the male perspective
Reference: PSYC 17/ 258
Department: Psychology

Many thanks for your response and the amended documents, and for your confirmation of acceptance of the risk assessment as amended by Health, Safety & Environment. Under the procedures agreed by the University Ethics Committee I am pleased to advise you that your Department has confirmed that all conditions for approval of this project have now been met. We do not require anything further in relation to this application.

Please note that on a standalone page or appendix the following phrase should be included in your thesis:

The research for this project was submitted for ethics consideration under the reference PSYC 17/ 258 in the Department of Psychology and was approved under the procedures of the University of Roehampton's Ethics Committee on 13.03.17.

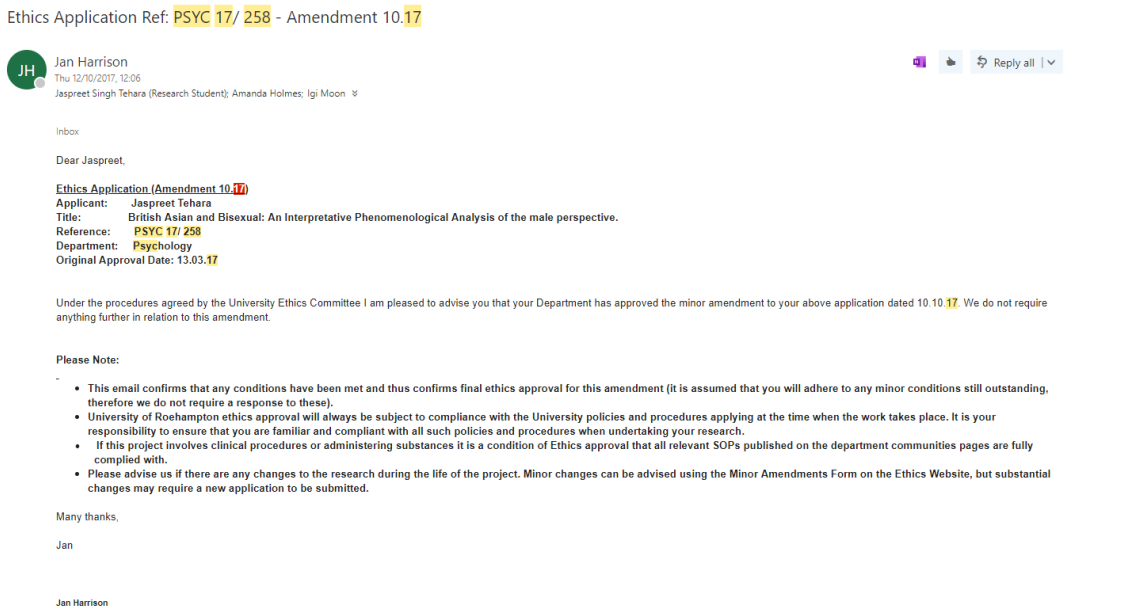
Please Note:

- **This email confirms that all conditions have been met and thus confirms final ethics approval (it is assumed that you will adhere to any minor conditions still outstanding, therefore we do not require a response to these).**
- **University of Roehampton ethics approval will always be subject to compliance with the University policies and procedures applying at the time when the work takes place. It is your responsibility to ensure that you are familiar and compliant with all such policies and procedures when undertaking your research.**
- **Please advise us if there are any changes to the research during the life of the project. Minor changes can be advised using the Minor Amendments Form on the Ethics Website, but substantial changes may require a new application to be submitted.**

Many thanks,

Jan

PSYC 1 of 9



Ethics Application Ref: PSYC 17/ 258 - Amendment 10.17

Jan Harrison
Thu 12/10/2017, 12:06
Jaspreet Singh Tehara (Research Student); Amanda Holmes; Igi Moon

Reply all

Inbox

Dear Jaspreet,

Ethics Application (Amendment 10.17)
Applicant: Jaspreet Tehara
Title: British Asian and Bisexual: An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis of the male perspective.
Reference: PSYC 17/ 258
Department: Psychology
Original Approval Date: 13.03.17

Under the procedures agreed by the University Ethics Committee I am pleased to advise you that your Department has approved the minor amendment to your above application dated 10.10.17. We do not require anything further in relation to this amendment.

Please Note:

- **This email confirms that any conditions have been met and thus confirms final ethics approval for this amendment (it is assumed that you will adhere to any minor conditions still outstanding, therefore we do not require a response to these).**
- **University of Roehampton ethics approval will always be subject to compliance with the University policies and procedures applying at the time when the work takes place. It is your responsibility to ensure that you are familiar and compliant with all such policies and procedures when undertaking your research.**
- **If this project involves clinical procedures or administering substances it is a condition of Ethics approval that all relevant SOPs published on the department communities pages are fully complied with.**
- **Please advise us if there are any changes to the research during the life of the project. Minor changes can be advised using the Minor Amendments Form on the Ethics Website, but substantial changes may require a new application to be submitted.**

Many thanks,

Jan

Jan Harrison